Friday, March 13, 2026 No 72 ₹7

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The Power of Good

193 Opposition MPs sign notice seeking motion to remove CEC

Page 6

Valverde shows City the Real power

Page 14

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Bengaluru Friday, March 13, 2026 Pages 22 Vol 79 No 72 ₹7

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DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

Fed up with KPSC, it must be abolished: Priyank

Page 3C

Nation

ED attaches fresh Rs 581-cr assets in Anil Ambani case P.7

State

BJP MLA Byrathi Basavaraj gets bail in murder case P.4

State

Govt may hike ration card income ceiling P.3C

World

China passes new ethnic minority law P.11

Iran's new leader vows to keep strategic strait shut

TEHRAN'S THREAT: Mojtaba Khamenei says will keep up Gulf attacks

TEHRAN/DUBAI, AGENCIES

Iran's new supreme leader released his first statement since succeeding his late father, saying Thursday that Iran would keep up its attacks on its Gulf Arab neighbours and use the effective closure of the strategic Strait of Hormuz as leverage against the United States and Israel.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, 56, who Israel suspects was wounded in the opening salvo of the war, did not appear on camera, and his statement was read by a state TV news anchor.

"The lever of blocking the Strait of Hormuz must definitely be used," Khamenei said of the waterway through which a quarter of the world's seaborne oil trade usually transits.

The Revolutionary Guards reacted swiftly, with the force's navy commander Alireza Tangsiri saying: "In response to the order of the commander-in-chief, we will deliver the harshest blows to the aggressor enemy while maintaining the strategy of closing the Strait of Hormuz."

Khamenei's statement included a vow to avenge those killed in the war, including in a strike on a school that killed over 165. The statement signalled a willingness to continue the war that has disrupted global energy supplies.

Before Khamenei's statement, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, a relative moderate in Iran's Shiite theocracy, suggested online that for the war to end, the world would need to recognise Iran's "legitimate rights," pay reparations and offer guarantees against future attacks.

▸ Mojtaba, Page 3C

Major developments on Thursday

Around **3.2 mn** people displaced inside Iran since war, UN

- Iran's security chief threatens to target power grids in the region if US attacks electricity supplies
- Kuwait's airport damaged in yet another strike
- Liberia-flagged vessel carrying oil from Saudi reaches Mumbai via Strait of Hormuz

Indians' death toll 3

The number of Indian mariners killed in the conflict has gone up to three with the death of a crew member during an attack on an oil tanker off Iraq. Page 7

Trump says rising oil prices mean greater profits for US, but his priority is stopping Iran from having nukes

Israel's military says Hezbollah fired 'biggest barrage' of 200 rockets

Oil prices hit $100

Two oil tankers burning off Iraq, authorities suspend all oil terminal operations

A foreign tanker carrying fuel oil damaged after catching fire following unidentified attacks, near Basra, Iraq. REUTERS

Modi speaks to Iran prez

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a phone call with President Masoud Pezeshkian of Iran and underlined the need for unhindered transit of goods and energy through the Persian Gulf. "Expressed deep concern over the escalation of tensions and the loss of civilian lives as well as damage to civilian infrastructure," Modi posted on X after speaking to Pezeshkian. This was the first phone call between Modi and Pezeshkian after Israel and the US launched attacks on Iran on February 28. "Reiterated India's commitment to peace and stability and urged for dialogue and diplomacy," he wrote on X.

WAR SHOCKS

Migrant workers in B'luru fret over 'chota' cylinders

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

The LPG cylinder shortage, caused by the conflict in West Asia, is burning a hole in the pockets of migrants working in Bengaluru.

Workers from Bihar, Jharkhand, and Nepal report that the price of an LPG cylinder has nearly doubled.

The 'chota' cylinders (3 kg to 5 kg), which are the primary ones used by the migrants, are either unavailable or are being sold at exorbitant rates.

Birendra Singh, a worker from Bihar, said, "A 5-kg refill that used to cost Rs 400 is now being sold for Rs 600. Some dealers are quoting as high as Rs 2,500 for larger commercial cylinders that previously cost Rs 1,100."

Another worker pointed out that even if the LPG cylinder is available, the quantity is suspect.

▸ LPG shortage, Page 3C

US not ready to escort oil tankers P.11 Rural LPG refill cycle increased P.7

Income not sole basis to decide OBC creamy layer tag: SC

Says candidate's parent's status, post also essential

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court has declared that income cannot solely be used to determine whether a candidate falls within the category of creamy layer or the non-creamy layer of the Other Backward Classes.

A bench of Justices P S Narasimha and R Mahadevan said that a reading of the 1993 Office Memorandum, with the clarificatory letter of October 14, 2004, revealed that income from salaries alone cannot be the sole criterion to decide whether a candidate falls within the creamy layer.

"The status and category of post to which a candidate's parents belong is essential. Exclusion under Categories I to III of the Schedule is status-based rather than purely income-based, reflecting the policy understanding that advancement in government service hierarchy denotes social progression independent of salary," the bench said.

▸ Creamy layer, Page 4

Bracketing backwardness

Treating employees of private entities and PSUs differently from government servants amounts to hostile discrimination

- While caste may be an indicator of historical disadvantage, it cannot be treated as the sole determinant of backwardness
- The object of excluding the creamy layer is to ensure that socially advanced sections within the OBCs do not appropriate benefits meant for the genuinely backward

'Blood donation ban on LGBTQ stays'

The Centre on Thursday told the Supreme Court that it has decided to retain the ban on blood donations by the LGBT community.

Details on Page 6

Trump's tariff pressure back with 'unfair' trade probe

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

US President Donald Trump's administration has launched an investigation into what it calls "unfair" trade policies of 16 leading economies, including India and China, a move that may lead to imposition of new tariffs.

The development comes less than a month after the US Supreme Court struck down Trump's previous tariffs — imposed through a decades-old emergency law — that had rattled global markets.

Singalling a fresh round of tariff tussle, the United States Trade Representative (USTR) announced on Wednesday launch of investigations under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974.

Details on Page 12

Medical student crushed to death by truck outside her college

A 21-year-old final-year MBBS student was killed and her classmate sustained serious injuries after a speeding tipper lorry knocked down their scooter while they were exiting the college on Mysuru Road on Wednesday. The deceased, Krithikaa C S B, was a student at Rajarajeswari Medical College.

P 3

Retail inflation rises to 10-month high of 3.21% in February

Retail inflation rose to a 10-month high of 3.21% in February from 2.74% in the previous month led by an uptick in prices of food, beverages and precious metals. Food inflation rose to 3.47% in February from 2.13% in January, as per data released by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation.

P 12

Inter-dept meet to tackle food contamination

BENGALURU, DHNS

Following the discovery of dangerous levels of toxic heavy metals and pesticide residues in vegetables and fruits being sold in Bengaluru, the state government on Thursday said that it would convene a meeting of all departments concerned and legislators to address concerns over rising food contamination.

Responding to a discussion in the Assembly, Malleswaram MLA Dr C N Ashwath Narayan said studies had found alarming levels of contaminants in vegetables and fruits. "More than 11 alloys and heavy metals and over 200 pesticide residues were found," he said.

He said the permissible limits per kg for metals are cadmium 0.2 mg, lead 0.3 mg, nickel 67.9 mg, iron 425.5 mg, copper 73.3 mg, zinc 99.4 mg, chromium 2.3 mg and manganese 500 mg. "But contamination in food samples is 20 to 30 times higher than the permissible limits," he said, adding that vegetables such as ashgourd, beans, capsicum, cabbage, chillies and cucumber showed high levels of contamination. He urged the government to take immediate steps to tackle the issue.

The findings were based on studies conducted under directions from the NGT and CPCB.

▸ Food contamination, P3C

CPCB confirms presence of lead in vegetables in B'luru

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Over two years after *DH* reported on heavy metal contamination in vegetables arriving in Bengaluru based on a study, new tests by a committee comprising Central and state authorities have confirmed the presence of lead, a highly toxic metal, and pesticides.

DH had on October 25, 2023, reported on the study of the 400 samples the researchers collected.

The National Green Tribunal had later taken up a suo motu case and ordered the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to "ascertain

Surveillance, social scoring figure in state's 1st AI panel meet

BENGALURU, DHNS: Aimed at developing a responsible AI policy and a roadmap for its implementation, the Karnataka government has constituted a committee chaired by Infosys co-founder Kris Gopalakrishnan and co-chaired by N Manjula, Secretary, Department of Electronics, IT, Biotechnology, and S&T. The 13-member committee includes other members drawn from industry, academia, policy and law.

Kris Gopalakrishnan

The committee is tasked with developing a comprehensive framework to guide the safe, ethical and transparent adoption of AI across government systems and public services. It aims to enable innovation while ensuring that AI systems deployed across the government are safe, fair, transparent and accountable.

During the first meeting on Thursday, the members of the committee discussed identifying AI practices that should be restricted, including social scoring of citizens, unlawful or disproportionate surveillance, discriminatory profiling or exclusion and high-stakes automated decision-making without meaningful human oversight.

They discussed the evolving AI landscape and the need to establish a governance framework to ensure the responsible use of AI, particularly in systems that impact citizens. Through this initiative, Karnataka aims to strengthen its leadership in emerging technologies.

▸ AI panel, Page4

WEATHER WORRY

El Nino threat for monsoon in second half

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The second half of the Indian summer monsoon may be impacted by a moderate or strong El Nino, but it is a bit early to figure out if the warming of the Pacific will develop into a "super El Nino", influencing weather even in 2027, meteorologists said here on Thursday.

Nevertheless, Indian weather scientists will keep a close watch, particularly in the wake of the latest modelling results from European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecast suggesting 98% chance of a moderate El Nino by August; 80% possibility of a strong event and 22% chance of a super El Nino.

El Nino is a natural cyclical warming of several of the parts Pacific Ocean,

altering weather patterns across the globe. El Nino years are generally associated with poor monsoon in India but there are exceptions.

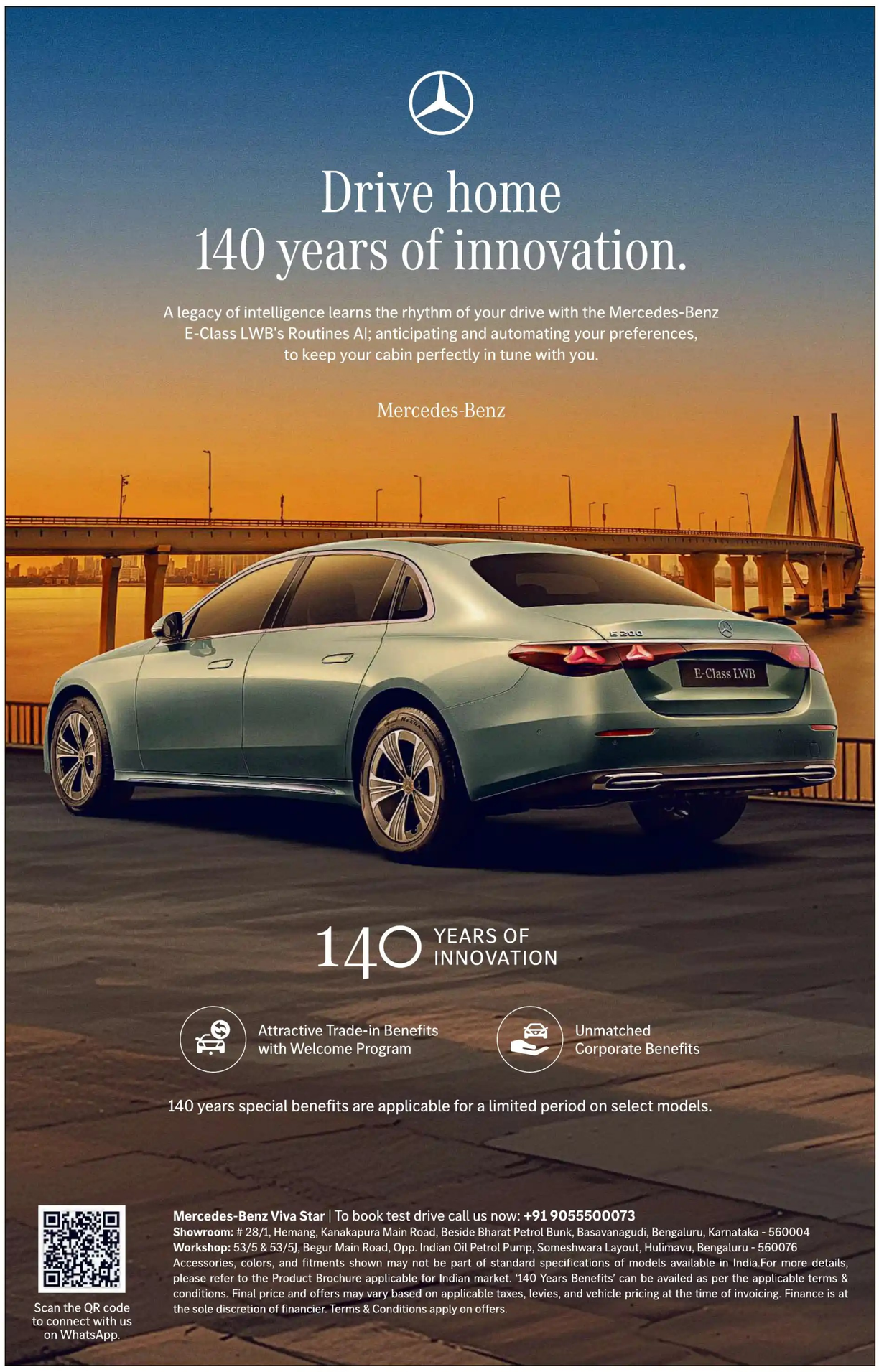
"All the models are in agreement of El Nino development in the second half of the monsoon season and the transition is expected by August. But at this time, the models are not very accurate in forecasting the El Nino strength due to spring barrier," Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, director general of meteorology at India Meteorological Department told *DH*.

The spring barrier refers to uncertainty in the outlook for ENSO (the El Nino – Southern Oscillation, as the phenomenon is known) in the first half of the year. It conveys the general idea that ENSO forecasts are more uncertain, or less skillful, in the spring season in the Northern Hemisphere.

Indian meteorologists said a clearer picture on a super El Nino might emerge by the end of May.

In a super El Nino, the sea surface temperature rises by two degrees Celsius whereas in the case of a strong event, the temperature rise is more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. A moderate El Nino is marked by a temperature rise of 1-1.5 degrees Celsius.

▸ El Nino, Page 4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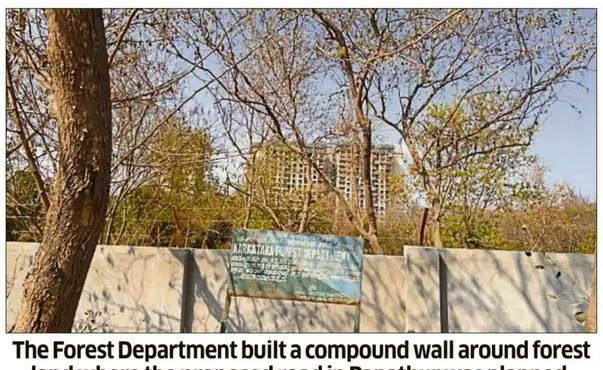
Forest dept opposes diversion of 5.4-acre Panathur forest for proposed 150-ft road

DCF flags impact on Nagaravana tree park; suggests upgrading existing road instead

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS



The Forest Department built a compound wall around forest land where the proposed road in Panathur was planned.

The 150-ft-wide road in Panathur comes to an abrupt end just before the forest land. DH PHOTOS/NAVEEN MENEZES

A proposed 150-feet-wide road project near Panathur in east Bengaluru, pending for years and frequently cited while granting building approvals in the area, now faces uncertainty after forest officials recommended against diverting forest land for its construction.

If the project stalls, pressure could continue to mount on the existing road network, which is narrow and poorly connected.

In January, the Bengaluru East City Corporation requested diversion of 2.20 hectares (around 5.4 acres) of deemed forest land in survey numbers 52 and 53 of Panathur village to construct the road, which is part of the revised master plan (RMP) linking the Outer Ring Road and the Varthur–Sarjapur Road.

Following a site inspection on February 26, Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF), Bengaluru Urban Division, N Ravindra Kumar recommended that the forest land should not be diverted for the proposed project.

The officer noted that the forest areas in Panathur and Gunjurpalya had already been notified as deemed forests under a Karnataka government order issued in 2022.

In his report, the DCF pointed out that the Forest Department is developing a 33-acre tree park in the area under the Union government's Nagaravana scheme aimed at promoting urban green spaces. Construction of the proposed road, he said, would split the park into two parts, rendering nearly 30% of the area unusable and wasting around Rs 40 lakh already spent on development work.

The report also warned that the road project could reduce forest density, disturb wildlife movement, affect biodiversity, damage green cover and impact groundwater recharge in what is described as a dry deciduous forest ecosystem with native tree species.

Officials added that significant work has already been undertaken in the Panathur forest area, including plantations, eco-trail development, water tank creation and the establishment of Nagaravana features such as Nakshatravana and Rashivana.

Instead of carving out a new road through the forest, the DCF suggested upgrading the existing tar road in the area to minimise environmental damage.

ARAVIND LIMBAVALI
Former MLA of Mahadevapura

"The DCF's remarks are not binding... the proposed road is part of the master plan and is critical to easing congestion in the area. What I understand is that the Forest Department has the authority to overrule and pass a favourable order.

"The DCF's remarks are not binding," said Aravind Limbavali, former MLA of Mahadevapura, adding that the proposed road is part of the master plan and is critical to easing congestion in the area.

"What I understand is that the Forest Department has the authority to overrule and pass a favourable order," Limbavali said.

Forest officials also raised concerns over the compensatory land proposed by the corporation in Mandur, stating that the site was once used as a waste dumping yard and is scientifically unsuitable for afforestation due to soil contamination, methane emissions, oxygen deficiency, and buried plastic waste.

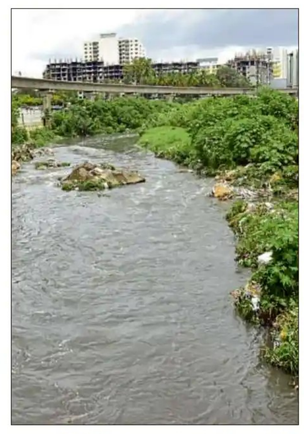
Limbavali said the corporation had initially offered alternate land in Anekal, which falls along an elephant corridor.

"Since there was no support from local officers in Anekal, Mandur was later selected for the afforestation work. It is a patch of revenue land adjoining the forest," he said.

Study flags pollution, health risks in Vrishabhavathi

Study also examines govt's Rs 391-crore plan to revive Byramangala Lake

BENGALURU, DHNS



Vrishabhavathi river

A new study on the state of the Vrishabhavathi river has raised serious concerns about its deteriorating condition, warning that pollution in the waterway has implications not only for the downstream ecology, but also for the food consumed by people in Bengaluru.

The report — State of Vrishabhavathi (2016–2025): River Condition, Public Health, and the Rs 391-crore Reboot — released by the research platform Mapping Malnad, examines the river's condition over nearly a decade and evaluates government efforts aimed at restoring the heavily polluted waterway.

According to the study, untreated sewage and industrial effluents continue to dominate the river's flow. It identifies industrial clusters such as Kumbalgodu, Byramangala and Bidadi as significant contributors of toxic discharge.

One of the key observations highlighted in the study relates to trade effluent sampled from a tanker that was physically intercepted while dumping waste directly into the river.

The sample recorded a Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) level of 69,000 mg/L. For context, any surface water body registering a COD level above 25 mg/L is considered polluted. The tanker was carrying effluent with a COD level nearly 2,760 times higher than that threshold.

The study notes that such incidents indicate that the scale of pollution entering the river is rarely reflected in official records.

Researchers say the degraded condition of the river affects not only Bengaluru, but also villages and water bodies downstream, where the polluted water is often used for irrigation. Crops such as vegetables, paddy, baby corn and cattle fodder are cultivated using water drawn from the river in the downstream command areas.

The study also examines the state government's Rs 391-crore plan to revive Byramangala Lake, a major water body fed by the Vrishabhavathi. The project proposes the construction of a sewage treatment plant, desilting of the lake, and restoration of embankments to prevent polluted inflows.

However, the researchers question whether such engineering interventions alone can restore the river system without addressing the larger issue of sewage generation and pollution upstream in Bengaluru. .

"When pollution is redirected downstream, bypassing the reservoir — to Kanakapura and to farmers in the Harobele dam command area — it becomes an injustice. They are burdened with a problem they did not create and whose magnitude they may not fully grasp," the report states.

Extreme river pollution alert

A tanker dumping waste directly into the river carried effluent with a Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) of 69,000 mg/L — nearly 2,760 times higher than the safe pollution threshold of 25 mg/L.

Bengaluru breathes easier than Delhi... and the reason is the wind

BENGALURU, DHNS

Meteorological conditions amplify pollution in most Indian cities, but the same phenomenon gives Bengaluru a breather, a new study says.

The study by Palak Balyan of Climate Trends examined PM2.5 pollution in urban environments and its interaction with meteorology. While atmospheric stagnation worsened PM2.5 concentration in some cities, dispersion helped Bengaluru and Chennai.

In Bengaluru, meteorology modulated pollution through ventilation efficiency rather than temperature extremes.

"PM2.5 variability is narrower compared to northern cities, reflecting Bengaluru's favourable dispersion conditions," the study noted, adding that about 90 to 95 per cent monthly compliance in both Bengaluru and Chennai was supported by stronger ventilation.

On the other hand, despite measurable reductions in annual mean PM2.5 concentration by about 27 per cent in Patna and about 7 per cent in Delhi between the winters of 2024 and 2025, compliance in winter 2025 remained critically poor. This was attributed to atmospheric stagnation.

"Meteorology-based clustering shows that more than 70% of days in northern Indo-Gangetic Plain cities fall under low-wind (less than 1 metre/second), high-humidity regimes that sustain PM2.5 concentrations exceeding 90-115 microgram per square metre," it said. "Shifts to ventilated regimes alone reduce concentration by about 35-40% even without emission changes."

The study pointed to consistent "high compliance" in southern and coastal cities, saying this was "due to favourable dispersion conditions", and noted that episodic interventions alone cannot resolve structural pollution.

"Incorporating meteorological regime analysis into regulatory planning and performance assessment is thus essential to distinguish true emission-driven improvements from weather-induced variability and to ensure that future policy outcomes translate into sustained reductions in population exposure and public-health risk," it said.

This condition has significant implications for the six cities chosen under the National Clean Air Programme, now entering its third phase.

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RFP FOR DOUBLING OF TRACK BETWEEN SELENGHAT AND BHOJO STATIONS

Tender Notice No.: CON/2026/FEB/03, Dated: 28-02-2026. E - Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work. **Tender No.:** CE/CON/FT/EPC/2026/04; **Name of Work:** RFP for Doubling of Track between Selenghat (394.30 km) (Excluding) and Bhojo Stations (including) upto km 457.00 ('62.70km') including Electrification & Signalling Works and connection with Furkating-New Tinsukia Doubling Project of Northeast frontier Railway in the state of Assam on EPC Mode. **Approx. Value :** ₹962,51,99,379.10/-; Date & time of **closing** of tender at **14:30** hrs. on **22-04-2026** and **opening** of tender at **15:30** hrs. on **28-04-2026**. For details of Tender and Corrigendum-1, please visit N.F. Railway website **www.ireps.gov.in**

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The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

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Construction of ROB in lieu of LC no. 97 @ Km:121/600-700 as 1x36 m Composite Girder (Railway Portion) + 3x18.71m PSC Girder (Kirangoor end) + 6x18.71m PSC Girder (Rampur end) + 3x28m PSC Girder (Rampur end) + RCC retaining wall (approach portion) and proposed Limited height subway at km:121/540 as 1x5x2.5m RCC box Between Pandavapura (PANP) and Shrirangapattana (S) Stations (Composite work). **(Tender Ref. No. ROB-LC-97-PANP-S)**	Rs. 37,59,30,128/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 15:00 Hrs on 31-03-2026**
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Sl.	Name of the Work	Approx. Value
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2	Assistant Divisional Engineer / Shivamogga Town (SMET) Sub Division: Painting of Rail Barricading and Height Gauges in Birur (RRB) - Talguppa (TLGP) and Kadur (DRU) - Chikkamagaluru (CMGR) sections.	Rs. 51,07,603/-
3	Rebuilding of stone arch bridges and Strengthening of bridges by jacketting between Chikjajur (JRU) - Rayadurg (RDG) and Chikjajur (JRU) - Sasalu (SLU) Sections. **Sub Work-1:** Rebuilding of stone arch bridge with RCC box for Bridge No.53 at Km.285/200-300 in Chikjajur (JRU) - Karajgi (KJG) Sections. **Sub Work-2:** Rebuilding of stone arch bridge with arch-shaped RCC box for Bridge No.58 at Km.281/900-282/000 in Chikjajur (JRU) - Karajgi (KJG) Sections.	Rs. 94,89,441/-
4	**Sub Work-I :** Birur (RRB) - Chikjajur (JRU) - Karajgi (KJG) section- TWS renewal on main line and on loop line -161 sets (1 in 12-118 sets & 1 in 8.5- 43 sets). **Sub Work-II:-** Chikjajur (JRU) - Rayadurg (RDG) Section: Through Turnout Renewal (FS+TWS+WCMSC) of 1 in 8.5 - 30sets. **Sub Work-III:-** Chikjajur (JRU) - Rayadurg (RDG) Section: Through Turnout Renewal (FS+TWS+WCMSC) of 1 in 12 - 26sets. **Sub Work-IV:-** Chikjajur (JRU) - Rayadurg (RDG) Section: TBR on main lines at scattered locations for a length of 4.065km between Haliyuru (HLV) - Challakere (CHKE) stations. **Sub Work-V:-** Chikjajur (JRU) - Rayadurg (RDG) section: Through ballast renewal on main lines at scattered locations for a length of 5.190km between Chikjajur (JRU) -Haliyuru (HLV) stations.	Rs. 3,46,10,620/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Up to 11.00 Hours on 30-03-2026**
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PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that we are investigating the title of immovable property being a residential site bearing No. 267, Khata No. 377/351/332/106/2 measuring 8800 Square Feet, carved out of the land bearing Survey No. 106 measuring 3 Acres 14½ Guntas situated at Ramagondanahalli Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk which is currently owned by Mr. Kiron Varghese. The land parcel for which we are investigating the title is described in the schedule below and shall hereinafter be referred to as the **"Schedule Property."**

If any person has any right, title, interest, claim, or demand in relation to the Schedule Property or any part thereof, or has executed any transactions or documents (whether registered or unregistered) with the owners or their predecessors in title, having the effect of creating an encumbrance thereon, they are hereby called upon to submit their statements, objections, or claims in writing, along with supporting documentary evidence, to the undersigned within fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this notice.

If no such objections are received within the said period, it shall be conclusively presumed that no person has any right, title, interest, claim, demand, charge, or encumbrance whatsoever over the Schedule Property or any part thereof, and we shall proceed to issue our opinion confirming that the owners have clear and marketable title to the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property being a residential site bearing No. 267, Khata No. 377/351/332/106/2 measuring 8800 Square Feet, carved out of the land bearing Survey No. 106 measuring 3 Acres 14½ Guntas situated at Ramagondanahalli Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk and bounded as follows:

East by : Site No. 268;
West by : Site No. 266;
North by : Road; and
South by : Private Property.

Date: 13/03/2026
Place: Bengaluru

Gerald Manoharan, Partner
JSA, Advocates
18th Floor, SKAV 909, No. 9/1
Residency Road, Richmond Circle
Bengaluru – 560 001.
Ph. 080-4350 3600 / 080-4350 3610
E-mail – gerald@jsalaw.com

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
NOTIFICATION
Bengaluru, 02 March 2026

S.O. 1118 (E) - In exercise of the powers conferred by clause 37(A) of Section 2 of the Railways Act, 1989 (Act no. 24 of 1989) the Ministry of Railway (South Western Railway, Construction Organization, Bengaluru Cantonment) hereby notifies the project, as "Special Railway Project" mentioned in the table below, in the State of Karnataka for providing National Infrastructure for a Public Purpose with effect from date of publication of the notification in the Official Gazette.

Sl. No.	Name of the Project
1	Quadrupling of Track between Whitefield - Bangarpet Station (47 Km)

No.W.271/CN/BNC/2025-26/Land SRP/1727
For details log on: https://egazette.gov.in
Pardeep Puri, Chief Engineer- III, Construction, Bengaluru Cantonment
PUB/971/AAS/PRB/SWR/2025-26

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South Western Railway-SWR SWRRLY @SWRAILWAYHQ @sw_railways

JAPIT
Jharkhand Agency for Promotion of Information Technology
(An Autonomous body under Department of Information Technology, Govt. of Jharkhand) Ground Floor, Engineer's Hostel – I, Near Golchakkar, Dhurwa, Ranchi, Jharkhand Phone. 0651-2401040, 2401067

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

On behalf of the Government of Jharkhand, JAP-IT invites Online Bids through Jharkhand e-procurement portal (https:\\Jharkhandtenders.gov.in) for empanelment of outsourced agencies under "Manpower Rate Contract" for providing Manpower to Departments/ Offices of the State Government of Jharkhand as per provision of "Jharkhand Manpower Procurement (Outsourcing) Manual, 2025". Details are as follows :

1.	Tender Reference number	JAP-IT/RC/MANPOWER/01/2026
2.	Name of Work	Empanelment of Outsourced Agencies under Manpower Rate Contract
3.	Tender Fee	INR 20,000/-(Rupees Twenty Thousand only) through Jharkhand e-Procurement portal
4.	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	INR 5,00,000/- (Rupees Five Lakh Only) through Jharkhand e-Procurement portal
5.	Start date/time of downloading Tender document	12.03.2026
6.	Last Date for sending Pre-Bid Query	14.03.2026
7.	Pre-bid meeting	17.03.2026, 03:00 PM
8.	Start date of bid submission	20.03.2026, 06:00 PM
9.	Last date and time of Online Bid Submission	31.03.2026, 03:00 PM
10.	Technical Bid Opening	01.04.2026, 03:30 PM
11.	Commercial Bid Opening	To be informed later.
12.	Place of Pre-Bid Meeting/ Communication/ Bid Submission/ Bid Opening	JAP-IT, Ground Floor, Engineers Hostel 1, Near Golchakkar, Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004
13.	Contact/ Pre-Bid query e-mail ID	Tel: 0651-2401044 Email: ceo.japit@jharkhandmail.gov.in / japit_doit@rediffmail.com

Note: 1. JAP-IT reserves the right to change the conditions or cancel the tendering process at any stage without assigning any reason thereof. Please visit the portal regularly for the same.
2. The Bidders are advised to submit the Bids well in advance as JAP-IT/GoJ will not be responsible for non-submission of the bids because of any technical glitches

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer, JAP-IT
PR.NO.374861 Information Technology(25-26):D

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
NOTIFICATION
Bengaluru, 02 March, 2026

S.O. 1117(E) - In exercise of the powers conferred by clause 37(A) of Section 2 of the Railways Act, 1989 (Act no. 24 of 1989) the Ministry of Railway (South Western Railway, Construction Organization, Bengaluru Cantonment) hereby notifies the project, as "Special Railway Project" mentioned in the table below, in the State of Karnataka for providing National Infrastructure for a Public Purpose with effect from date of publication of the notification in the Official Gazette.

Sl. No.	Name of the Project	Village	Taluk	District
1	Bengaluru City - Mysuru Section: Construction of Road Under Bridge in lieu of LC No. 10 at KM: 10/900 - 11/000 between Nayandahalli and Kengeri stations	Valagerahalli	Bengaluru South	Bengaluru

No.W.271/CN/BNC/2025-26/Land SRP/1727
For details log on: https://egazette.gov.in
Pardeep Puri, Chief Engineer- III, Construction, Bengaluru Cantonment
PUB/972/AAS/PRB/SWR/2025-26

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South Western Railway-SWR SWRRLY @SWRAILWAYHQ @sw_railways

International conference on life skills education at Kristu Jayanti varsity

BENGALURU, DHNS: "Strengthening human values and life skills is essential in the age of Artificial Intelligence to ensure technology does not replace human thinking," said Dr A Radhakrishnan Nair, founder-president of the Indian Association of Life Skills Education.

Dr Nair was speaking at the International Conference on Life Skills Education organised by the Centre for Life Skills Education at Kristu Jayanti (Deemed to be University) on Thursday.

Speaking on the theme "The Human Touch in the Age of AI: Cultivating Essential Life Skills", he emphasised that life skills help individuals understand themselves, recognise their strengths and weaknesses, and navigate challenges in life.

He described life skills as essential psychosocial abilities that enable individuals to effectively adapt to changing social conditions while maintaining emotional balance, sound judgment, and strong ethical values.

Dignitaries present

Among those present were the university's Chief Finance Officer Fr Dr Jais V Thomas; Dr Jonas Richard, Professor and Head of the Department of Social Work; Conference Convenor Dr Prathap G, and Co-convenor Dhanapal.

Invites to be published should be sent to:
incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in.
Please note that hard copies will not be accepted

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Exhibition: On travel and tourism; Organised by the Department of Tourism; HK Patil, Trilokchandra KV and others to take part; Tripura Vasini, Palace Grounds; 11 am.

Award ceremony: Distribution of Annual Karnataka Media Academy awards; Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar to participate; Banquet hall, Vidhana Soudha; 5 pm.

Discussion: On 'Reframing Cities for Resilience'; Arun Jain, Champaka Rajagopal, Jayanagar Dhindaw, and Srikanth Viswanathan; Bangalore International Centre, Domlur; 6.30 pm.

CULTURAL

Play: 'Mukhyamantri'; Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar; 7.30 pm.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Mainly clear sky

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	32.0°C
Minimum	19.0°C
Rainfall	--
Humidity	95%
Sunset (March 13)	6:30 pm
Sunrise (March 14)	6:29 am
Moonrise	1:11 am
Moonset	12:37 am

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

IMA Karnataka holds awareness programme on kidney health

BENGALURU, DHNS

A one-kilometre walkathon was organised to spread awareness about kidney disease prevention, with around 500 doctors and students joining the rally and carrying placards to promote kidney health. DH PHOTO

The Karnataka State Branch of Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Thursday raised awareness about kidney health.

Dr Venkatesh, senior urologist, emphasised preventive measures to protect kidney health and the need for early detection of symptoms.

The doctors also shared the impact of lifestyle and non-communicable diseases on kidney health.

Transplant recipients were present to motivate others to donate organs.

A one-kilometre walkathon was held to spread awareness about kidney disease prevention. Around 500 doctors and students, carrying placards, participated in the rally.

HC: Possessing child porn violates IT, Pocso Acts

Petitioner claims mere storage of child porn would not amount to an offence, and it becomes an offence only if it is transmitted

BENGALURU, DHNS

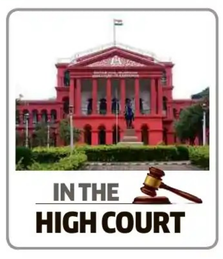
The Karnataka High Court has refused to quash proceedings against a person from Kerala over possession of child pornography content on a mobile phone.

The court cited an Apex Court judgement and said that possession or storage of pornographic material involving a child would attract the rigours of Section 67B of the Information Technology Act and Section 15 of the Pocso Act.

The crime was registered by the Commercial Street police in Bengaluru against the petitioner, hailing from Thrissur in Kerala.

The police had registered the FIR in 2025 for offences under Section 67B of the Information Technology Act and Section 15 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012.

The petitioner claimed that mere storage of child pornography would not amount to an offence and it becomes an offence only if it is transmitted.



Justice M Nagaprasanna cited the Apex Court judgement in the Just Rights for Children Alliance Vs S Harish case.

> **JUSTICE NAGAPRASANNA**
> "... Merely because the petitioner has not transmitted anything from his phone would not mean that he would not be liable for the ingredients of the said offence. It is for the petitioner to come out clean in a full-blown trial.

"The Supreme Court in the aforementioned judgement in unambiguous terms holds that possession or storage of pornographic material involving a child would attract the rigours of Section 67B of the IT Act and Section 15 of the Pocso Act.

"The Supreme Court further holds that Section 15 of the Pocso Act is in the nature and form of an inchoate offence, which also penalises the mere storage or possession of child pornographic material when done with the specific intent to share or transmit, without requiring any actual transmission or dissemination, since the intention must be determined from the manner in which such material is stored or possessed and the circumstances in which the same was not deleted, destroyed or reported," Justice Nagaprasanna said.

"The petitioner has admittedly stored sexually explicit pictures and videos of children, which would amount to storage of child pornography under Section 15 of the Pocso Act.

"Merely because the petitioner has not transmitted anything from his phone would not mean that he would not be liable for the ingredients of the said offence. It is for the petitioner to come out clean in a full-blown trial," Justice Nagaprasanna said.

Man arrested for knife attack on beautician he met on FB

BENGALURU, DHNS

A 27-year-old woman was allegedly attacked with a knife in Electronics City on Tuesday night by a man she had recently met on Facebook.

The incident triggered tension in the Platinum Apartment area. The accused, S Davit, 33, was arrested on Wednesday.

The victim, Simngirhui Halam, a native of Assam, works as a beautician in the city. She was previously married and has a daughter, and had divorced her husband about four years ago.

Police said Simngirhui came in contact with Davit through Facebook in 2025 while she was in Pune, after which they began speaking regularly over the phone.

Davit later came to Bengaluru and began staying with Simngirhui in a rented house in Tirupalya after telling her he was married, but living separately from his wife. The two decided to live together.

However, Davit frequently got drunk, quarrelled with Simngirhui, demanded money and threatened to kill her.

About a week ago, Simngirhui reportedly moved out and began staying with her sister at an apartment on Neeladri Nagar Road in Electronics City.

Tried to slit her throat

Around 9.30 pm on Tuesday, Simngirhui got off the lift on the fifth floor and found Davit waiting in the corridor with a knife. When she tried to escape, he placed the knife to her neck with the intention of killing her. As she tried to defend herself, she sustained injuries to her finger and neck.

She was rushed to a hospital and the police were alerted.

Based on her statement recorded at the hospital, the Electronic City police registered a case of attempt to murder against Davit.

He was traced, arrested and remanded in judicial custody after interrogation.

Domestic help arrested for Rs 16-lakh theft from employer's house

BENGALURU, DHNS: A domestic help who had been working for nearly 25 years at an elderly couple's house in Pulakeshinagar has been arrested for allegedly stealing cash and gold jewellery worth Rs 16 lakh.

The accused has been identified as 55-year-old Dhanalakshmi R.

Police said the complaint was filed on February 19.

The elderly couple used to withdraw cash from a nearby bank every month for household expenses and often took Dhanalakshmi along.

Police suspect in 2025, the woman stole about Rs 14 lakh in cash and two gold chains weighing 54 grams from the house without their knowledge.

During questioning, Dhanalakshmi confessed to the theft. Based on information, police recovered 54 grams of gold jewellery and Rs 8 lakh in cash from her house in Cox Town.

Final-year MBBS student killed after tipper lorry hits scooter outside RR medical college

Her friend — the rider — is in hospital, but out of danger

BENGALURU, DHNS

A 21-year-old final-year MBBS student was killed and her classmate sustained serious injuries after a speeding tipper lorry rammed into their scooter on Mysuru Road on Wednesday afternoon.

The deceased, Krithikaa CSB, was a resident of Bengaluru and a student at Rajarajeswari Medical College and Hospital (RRMCH). Her friend Hansa, who was riding the scooter, is currently undergoing treatment at the same hospital and is said to be out of danger.

Krithikaa

According to the Kengeri traffic police, the accident occurred around 4.15 pm when the duo was exiting the college gate after their classes. As Hansa attempted to enter the main road to head towards Mysuru, a tipper lorry travelling from the city side towards Mysuru crashed into their Honda Activa.

"The impact caused the scooter to skid. While the rider, Hansa, fell to the left side of the road, Krithikaa, who was riding pillion, fell to the right. The rear wheels of the lorry ran over her," said Anoop Shetty, DCP (Traffic, West).

Passersby and college staff rushed both students to the RRMCH emergency ward. However, Krithikaa succumbed to her injuries shortly after.

The Kengeri traffic police have registered a case of causing death by negligence (Section 304A of the IPC) and rash driving. The tipper lorry has been seized and the driver is being interrogated.

Toddler dies after falling into water sump

BENGALURU, DHNS: A two-and-a-half-year-old boy died after accidentally falling into a water sump in his house compound at Madanayakanahalli on Wednesday.

Chirag

The deceased has been identified as Chirag, the son of Likesh and Ruthu, residents of Kachohalli in Dasanapura village.

Police said the incident occurred in the evening when the child's father was washing his car outside the house and had opened the lid of the water sump to fetch water.

Chirag, who was playing nearby, fell into the open sump filled with water. When the child was not seen for some time, family members began searching for him.

Later, Likesh checked the sump and found the boy floating. He rushed the child to a nearby hospital where he was declared brought dead.

A case of unnatural death has been registered at the Madanayakanahalli police station and further investigation is on.

Bengaluru police charge-sheet six over abusive posts on Darshan's wife

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru police have filed a 473-page charge sheet against six people in a case related to abusive social media posts against Vijayalakshmi, the wife of jailed Kannada film star Darshan Thoogudeepa.

Vijayalakshmi

The charge sheet was filed by the cybercrime police before the 45th ACMM court in the city.

Police had arrested six men, including a 31-year-old techie from Davangere, after receiving a complaint from Vijayalakshmi on December 24.

Vijayalakshmi told the police that certain individuals were posting obscene, derogatory comments and sending messages on Facebook, Instagram and other social media platforms, targeting her and her family. This came after she had spoken about her husband and his acting career at an event in Davangere to celebrate the success of his Kannada film, 'The Devil'.

Vijayalakshmi listed 18 social media accounts, including those operating under the handles 'Yogi Kichcha', 'Mr Anath', 'Mahi Kichcha' and 'Virat Kichcha', and shared screenshots and links.

According to the charge sheet, some of the accused opened fake accounts solely to post these comments and messages with Vijayalakshmi's photographs. During questioning, they confessed to uploading the posts despite knowing their obscene nature, the charge sheet notes.

Police seized the mobile phones of the accused individuals and sent them to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for data retrieval.

"This is a preliminary charge sheet. An additional charge sheet may be submitted after further investigation," a police officer said.

Meanwhile, all accused have moved the High Court of Karnataka for bail. The hearing is scheduled for March 24, the officer added.

Darshan, 49, is currently in prison in the Renukaswamy murder case.

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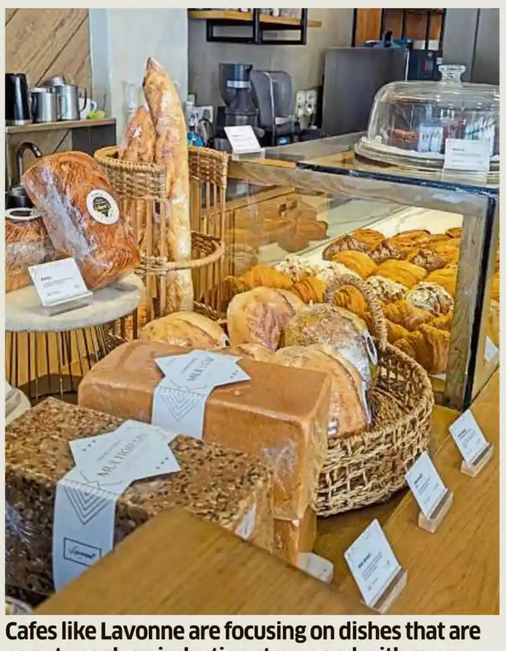
Gas woes: Cafes switch to baked, easy-to-cook items



Cafes like Lavonne are focusing on dishes that are easy to cook on induction stoves and with ovens.

Instead of shutting shop, numerous restaurants are de-prioritising dishes that need LPG

RASHMI RAJAGOPAL
TEAM METROLIFE

As commercial cooking gas begins running out of stock, upscale cafes and restaurants are tweaking their menus to focus more on dishes that require minimal use of flame. Rather than shutting shop, restaurateurs are prioritising baked goods, raw food like salads, wood-fire cooking and dishes that are easy to make on induction stoves.

"We are focusing more on steamed, oven-baked and simple dishes that can be cooked on induction stoves," says Avin Taliath, co-founder of Lavonne Hospitality Private Limited, which runs the Lavonne Cafes, Malaysian restaurant Kopitiam Lah and ice cream shop, Lick. Two years ago, the Lavonne kitchens switched to electricity-based cooking appliances for most of their dishes. However, for their Malaysian restaurant, which primarily uses woks, finding an alternative source of cooking is presenting a challenge. "For now, at our cafes, we are using induction stoves for dishes like shakshuka, mushroom toast, and omelettes," he shares.

Specialty coffee shop, The Caffeine Baar, with outlets on Church Street and in Jayanagar, was also forced to limit their menu to dishes that are more suited to induction stoves. Their all-day breakfast, open sourdough toasts, egg-based dishes and desserts have been retained, says Poojya Prasad, co-founder.

Craft breweries, like Mannheim, Hoodi, are pushing customers towards ordering tandoori and barbecue dishes. "We have instructed our waiters to guide diners towards these dishes, especially when asked for recommendations. Most of them don't mind, because they understand that we are in a tough spot," explains Nirmal P V, co-founder.

Some businesses like The Oterra, a five-star hotel in Electronics City, have been untouched by the crisis.

"In 2025, when we achieved our net zero milestone, we also transitioned our kitchens to run on electric power, sourced from a private provider that generates electricity from solar and wind energy. The current LPG shortage has not affected our operations," reveals Srinivas Adiga, general manager.

Coffee crunch on the cards

Coffee connoisseurs in the city are stocking up on coffee, as retailers put out notices on their websites alerting customers to delays in delivery. Typically, coffee beans are roasted using LPG gas and with the supply crunch, roasteries are facing an impossible challenge.

A techie from South Bengaluru purchased four 250 gm packs of coffee after learning that one of his preferred specialty coffee shops was running low on stock. "I usually buy about two 250 gm packs a month," he shares. Adding that, he plans to freeze the beans to retain their flavour.

Caffeine Baar sources its coffee from its own estate in Chikkamagaluru. Poojya states that their roasteries, which supply beans to numerous other businesses, have enough LPG supply to last about a month.

Maverick and Farmer, which also uses single-origin coffee from its Kodagu estate and has its own roasteries, is prioritising roasting its most popular coffee variants. The cafe, which has three outlets, has a total of 14 coffee variants. They are also prepping for the launch of their fourth outlet, in Hennur, says Ashish D'Abreo, one of the founders.

POPCORN

Holey miracle

This story comes from Uttar Pradesh. A brain-dead woman, a report said, was jolted alive when the vehicle she was being driven in hit a pothole. Doctors were quick to point out that she was probably in a coma — brain-dead people don't come back to life. Anyway, who deserves the credit for this miracle? The doctors who displayed extraordinary speed by declaring a living woman dead, or the municipal authorities whose venality saved a life?

'Social media ban for kids won't be easy to implement'

Critics flag a lack of research and public consultation behind Karnataka's proposal

BARKHA KUMARI & SATHVI G BHAT
TEAM METROLIFE

The Karnataka government's proposal to ban social media for children under 16, in a bid to shield them from addiction, cyberbullying and other harms, has sparked debate over whether such a drastic step is necessary and how it would be enforced.

The minimum age to join Instagram, Snapchat, Reddit, Facebook and Threads is 13. Barring 13-15-year-olds from the apps has raised questions about whether it infringes on young people's right to expression in the digital age.

Australia introduced a similar ban in December, leading to millions of underage accounts being removed or deactivated. But experts say it is too early to judge its effectiveness, and reports already suggest many children have found workarounds. The country expects platforms to implement age-assurance measures, or face heavy fines. However, Prathik Desai, founder of The Media Triangle, which conducts media literacy workshops for young people, is sceptical that companies will make major changes as it would hurt their revenue. He believes they will always leave some loophole that could be exploited.

What about kid influencers?

Eight-year-old Ashmitha Srivatsav has 1.58 lakh followers on Instagram. Her posts revolve around daily life, hobbies and her pet. Her parents shoot the videos and upload them, often using her ideas for content. The account is not monetised, but her mother, actor Shweta, wonders whether accounts run entirely by parents would fall under the proposed ban.

Rakesh V G, father of 14-year-old rock musician Megan, raises another question. "Many parents hand children phones to scroll or watch reels just to keep them occupied. Would the ban apply there too?" he asks.

Most children, parents and counsellors favour measures such as age-appropriate filters and locks on short-format videos rather than a ban. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

Megan's parents manage her social media accounts, which generate about 20% of her earnings, with the rest coming from offline gigs. The income has helped her set up a home studio and pay for school fees and vocal training. Rakesh says social media has provided exposure and feedback for Megan that he never had growing up. He insists on parental supervision as that has helped her navigate online negativity, including racial slurs during livestream gigs.

Some parents favour restrictions, not a sweeping ban. Manasi Holehonnur's son, now 14, uses WhatsApp, Snapchat and Reddit with parental controls. "Social media helps him stay connected with his cousins abroad, learn skills like public speaking, and gather different perspectives on news. If it suddenly disappears, parents like us may struggle to manage how children use that extra time," she says.

Aruna Sujit initially installed parental controls on her teenage daughter's phone, but later removed them when she felt she was using social media responsibly. But she recognises the potential dangers of the online world for children in their formative years. Aruna had encouraged her daughter to join Instagram to showcase her singing talent, but she rarely posted, fearing judgement. Instead, she spent most of her time chatting, including with strangers. "She later realised some of them were a bad influence and cut them off," Aruna says.

'Will make youth angry'

Young users themselves are divided. A 12-year-old from Jalahalli supports the ban, saying many of her classmates use social media irresponsibly while parents remain unaware. "One girl talks to random people and shares her photos. Her grades are also falling," she says. She also recalls how a school "confessions" page once leaked private conversations.

Thirteen-year-old Kavya Hari, who uses WhatsApp, feels a ban is unnecessary. "Bullying or anxiety doesn't happen only because of social media. A lot of it begins offline," she says.

For Sameehan Parag Desai, a 15-year-old who plays flute and makes electronic music, social media is a major creative resource. He says a blanket ban would only "anger the youth". Without it, he would struggle to discover new musicians, stay in touch with friends after school hours, and keep up with information. Instead, he suggests platforms introduce time limits or restrictions on short-video feeds. Sameehan uses Snapchat and WhatsApp.

Where's the evidence?

Pranesh Prakash of Anekaanta, a technology policy consultancy, says enforcement would lead to extensive surveillance, including ID checks, which would raise the risk of privacy breaches or data theft. He argues that governments must first demand rigorous and region-specific evidence from companies to ascertain the long-term harms of social media use. The scale of regulation must be proportionate to the scale of harm, he suggests.

Media literacy

Desai says the proposal leaves several questions unanswered. Is such regulation the Centre's prerogative, or can states impose it? Can different states set different age cut-offs — Andhra Pradesh is considering a ban for kids under 13? Has there been public consultation? He argues that a ban could increase unregulated use of social media and shrink safe spaces where teenagers discuss their concerns. "Adolescence is when young people develop agency, critical thinking and judgement. Today those skills also need to evolve online," he says. Neha Poonacha, wellbeing counsellor at a Hennur school, believes media literacy along with self-regulation offer a practical middle path between achieving safety and freedom online.

EVENTS

Film screening
Bedabrata Pain's acclaimed documentary 'Déjà Vu', which explores the devastating impact of corporate-driven agricultural reforms, will be screened on March 15, 6 pm, at Bangalore International Centre, Domlur. Entry free.

Epic showcase
Apoorva Krishna Collective will present 'Navarasa — The Mahabharata Experience', a musical exploration of the Hindu epic, on March 14, 6 pm, at Bangalore Gayana Samaja, Basavanagudi. Balcony seating free for students. Tickets online.

Classical concert
A Hindustani vocal recital by Shubha Mudgal, along with the release of the book 'Gaana Tapasvi — Pt Parameshwar Hegde', will be held on March 14, 5.30 pm, at Khincha Sabhangana, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavana, Race Course Road. The evening, titled 'Swara Sapthati', marks the 70th birthday celebration of Hindustani classical vocalist Parameshwar Hegde. Entry free.

First ever AI-translated book in Kannada ready

Publisher says output was 85% accurate and the rest was refined through manual edits

TINI SARA ANIEN
TEAM METROLIFE

A Kannada edition of 'My Name is Gauhar Jaan', translated from English using AI, will be released on Sunday. The original book by Vikram Sampath tells the story of India's first celebrity singer, Gauhar Jaan.

The cover of 'Nanna Hesaru Gauhar Jaan'.

A translation tool developed by Bengaluru-based company Naav AI was used to generate the Kannada version. The company was co-founded by Sampath and technologist Sandeep Singh.

Conventional translation of a book can take three to four months, says Shrigouri S Joshi, language editor at Naav AI. "With the AI tool, the first draft of 'Nanna Hesaru Gauhar Jaan' was generated within 30 minutes, and the manual editing and corrections took about a month," she adds.

Some issues in the AI translation revolved around context, tone and cultural nuances. "In Kannada, a single word can have several meanings depending on the context. Sometimes the AI chose a meaning that did not suit the situation," she says. The book's musical context also posed challenges. "References to ragas, including their names and spellings, had to be corrected," she adds.

Shrigouri believes AI can assist rather than replace human translators. "AI can generate the first draft quickly, but the final quality still depends on human editing," she says.

Publisher says...

M A Subramanya, founder of Hubballi-based Sahitya Prakashana, says he compared the Kannada translation with the original during proofreading. It was also reviewed by veteran journalist Gopalkrishna Hegde.

He says the AI-assisted translation appeared more uniform than manual translations. "In manual translations, translators often use different Kannada equivalents for the same English words. Here, the language was consistent throughout, with the translation about 85% accurate," he says.

The book is priced at Rs 595.

'Nanna Hesaru Gauhar Jaan' will be released on March 15, 5.30 pm, at Viveka Auditorium, Yuvaka Sangha, Jayanagar. Entry free. To order, visit sahityaprakashan.com

Santoor meets symphony

TEAM METROLIFE

Bengaluru will host a symphonic presentation of the santoor next week. Rahul Sharma will perform on the 100-stringed instrument alongside a 35-piece chamber orchestra, conducted by Samuel Tamarit Otero of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice.

Rahul Sharma

Like his father, the legendary Shivkumar Sharma, who brought the santoor from the realm of folk music into Hindustani classical music, Rahul is keen to take it to new territories and listeners. He has also dabbled in film composition and experimented with genres such as jazz electronica. The upcoming show, titled 'Symphony of Santoor' and presented by Banyan Tree Events, is part of that pursuit to expand the instrument's possibilities.

"It was extremely challenging to compose the score so that both worlds blend harmoniously. The music is designed to feel novel while also creating a calming effect, since Indian ragas are therapeutic in nature," says Rahul, adding that the show first began as a collaboration with the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra in 2020.

He says classical music has not lost its appeal in the digital age. "My recent album 'Tree of Tranquility' with the Grammy-winning electronica group Deep Forest has seen major success in downloads and streaming," he says.

On March 18, 8 pm, at Maanikya Hall, Chamara Vajra, Jayamahal Main Road. Tickets online.

Bizman sets national record in freediving

Dinesh Soundappa officially achieved the feat in the Variable Weight category, diving to a depth of 34.6 mtr

SHRADDHA A K
TEAM METROLIFE

Dinesh Soundappa broke the national freediving record in the men's category on March 4 at the San Antonio Beach in Calapan, Philippines. The 33-year-old completed a dive of 34.6 mtr. The previous record of 24.8 mtr was held by Geo Joe Arakkal, who achieved it on January 11, 2025, in the Maldives.

Dinesh Soundappa reached the milestone in Philippines.

Soundappa, now a free diving coach and part-time real estate developer, trained for three years with Freediving Coaches of Asia (FCOA) and the Australian company Freediving Family, before achieving the feat.

Freediving is a water sport in which divers hold their breath and use physical and mental techniques to descend underwater, often beyond 40 metres.

He discovered freediving after a snorkelling trip in the Maldives in 2021, which ignited his passion for the underwater world.

"I attended a one-week freediving retreat in Thailand," Soundappa shares, adding, "Beyond the physical aspect, I discovered its profound mental health benefits." After the course, he returned to the country and did dynamic exercises in pools to train for freediving, and then went to train under the coach and founder of FCOA, Jeroen Elout, in December 2025.

The major setback that Soundappa faced was the lack of locations across India.

"There are not many places to go freediving. Quarries, while a good option, are not open to the public, and once I was even asked to leave after I tried to dive into a well," the IIM Bengaluru alumnus says.

Accidental record

Elout taught him a minimalist diving philosophy focused on safety and self-reliance. The IIT Madras graduate quickly started progressing beyond his personal best (PB) of 15 mtr. He hit 25 mtr in his very first VWT (Variable Weight) dive, which surpassed the previous national record of 24.8 mtr. It was then that Elout encouraged Soundappa to check the national record. "To officially break a record in freediving, it needs to be filmed for the judges to verify, so even though I had technically broken the record, it was not official," Soundappa shares. He dived again on February 26, the very next day, where it was filmed and verified, and set the national record at 31.5 mtr.

On his last day in the Philippines, with his wisdom tooth ruptured, and hours before his flight back to India, Soundappa dived again. This one felt easy and experimental, and only later did he realise he had broken the national record for the second time.

CITY MIX

Month-long art festival opens today

The Whitefield Art Collective returns for its ninth edition on March 13, 6 pm, at V R Bengaluru, Whitefield. The month-long festival will feature sculptures, installations, photography exhibitions, artist showcases, film screenings, a marketplace and workshops (resin art, cyanotype and clay modelling).

This year's theme, 'Tomorrow, Altered!', explores how environmental shifts, technological developments and changing social realities are reshaping our present and future. The idea is also reflected in the festival's flagship art installation, 'Kala Car'. The opening evening will feature a concert by Ricky Kej and ensemble, along with a fashion showcase. The event is supported by UNESCO, and 'Braided River', a photographic exhibition on Indian women in science, is a key part of that engagement.

An installation at the previous edition.

Until April 12. Look up the schedule on @whitefieldartcollective on Instagram.

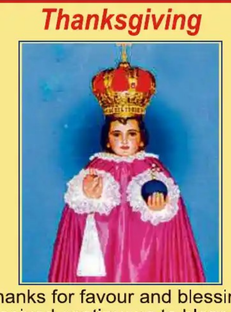
Fete of plays, short stories to mark Ugadi

Ranga Shankara, J P Nagar, will host plays and readings of short stories on March 15, from 10.55 am onwards. Titled 'Ranga Yugadi 2026', it will present three plays – 'Huccha Munsiffa' by Yuvashree, 'Lottery' by Aikyam, and 'Kepina Dabbi' by Eranke Theatre.

Distinguished artistes such as Bertie Olivera, Ganesh Shenoy, Ananya Suresh and Uma Y G will be part of the event. Ugadi dishes will be served at the cafe on the premises.

Tickets online.

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving

Thanks for favour and blessings received continuous to bless us.
- D.Sathish Kumar & Shaila Sathish Kumar

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Cabinet approves Bill to curb 'honour' killing

BENGALURU, DHNS: The state Cabinet on Thursday approved the 'Eva Nammava Eva Nammava' Bill to curb crimes in the name of honour and tradition.

DH had reported on January 16, 2026, that the government has drafted the Karnataka Freedom of Choice in Marriage and Prevention and Prohibition of Crimes in the name of Honour and Tradition Bill, 2026 to prevent "honour" killings.

The Bill has been named 'Eva Nammava' Eva Nammava' after a famous Vachana by 12th-century social reformer and anti-caste crusader Basavanna.

As per the latest draft, those causing "honour killings" will be punished with a minimum prison term of five years.

The Bill comes after the murder of Manya Patil in Hubballi, allegedly by her own family members for marrying a person from the Scheduled Caste (SC) family.

The Cabinet also approved the Karnataka Advertisement Policy, 2026 by the Kannada, Culture and Information Department. The State Education Policy (SEP) was placed in the Cabinet but no decision was taken. The issue has been deferred to the next meeting. While there was a proposal to develop the 'KHB Surya' sports village, including an international cricket stadium at Anekal at a cost of Rs 1,980 crore, the Cabinet has only approved the proposal to construct an international cricket stadium and not the entire sports village.

KSRTC to induct 70 Pallakki buses today

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) is set to induct 70 Pallakki non-AC sleeper buses on Friday.

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy will flag off these buses, along with 45 Sarige (non-AC seater) vehicles, at the corporation's central office.

This is the second batch of Pallakki buses the state-run operator is inducting. Forty Pallakki buses — Kannada for palanquin and carrying the tagline 'Happiness is Travelling' — were first inducted in October 2023.

Pallakki buses feature warm white LED reading lights, LED berth-number displays, public address systems, audio speakers and shoe racks under the lower berths.

One of the new Pallakki non-AC sleeper buses to be inducted on Friday.

The 45 Karnataka Sarige buses being introduced will add to the KSRTC's existing fleet of 5,904 Karnataka Sarige vehicles.

The KSRTC has a total of 8,866 buses in its fleet. These also include 445 AC buses (Volvo, Scania, Mercedes Benz, Corona and Tata), 189 non-AC sleeper buses, 179 Rajahamsa buses, and 2,151 Nagara Sarige buses.

Under PM eBus Sewa, a centrally sponsored scheme, the KSRTC will receive 350 electric buses — 100 each for Mysuru and Mangaluru, and 50 each for Davangere, Shivamogga and Tumakuru.

The Centre has allocated Rs 500 crore in the 2026-27 budget for the scheme's nationwide implementation.

The new routes

From Bengaluru to: Davangere, Jamkhandi, Chitradurga, Mangaluru, Agumbe, Horanadu, Kukke Subrahmanya, Chennai, Madurai, Puducherry, Panaji, Hyderabad, Tiruchirapalli, Kasaragodu and Kannur.

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Auction Sale Notice of Immovable Property

AUCTION SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY UNDER SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002.

Whereas, the Bank has issued notice under Section 13(2) of the SARFAESI Act, 2002 and in pursuant to and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(4) of the Act, the **Authorised Officer, The Karnataka State Co-Operative Apex Bank Ltd, Bengaluru-560018** has taken possession of the Mortgaged properties including those more fully described hereunder, and the Bank has decided to sell the below mentioned properties under the provisions of the SARFAESI Act read with the relevant rules 6(2) & 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Sl. No.	Name of the Borrowers	Description of Properties and Boundaries & Measurement	Reserve Price and EMD Amount	Balance Outstanding Amount to be paid to the Bank	Date & Time of Opening Tender & Place of Auction
1.	**(1) M/s. Value Bazaar Traders Pvt. Ltd.**, Rep. by its Directors and Authorised Signatory (i) Sri Subhash Sreedaran (ii) Smt.Sreepriya Rajesh Having its Registered Office at: No.166, K NO.76, Vibuthipura Village, Bengaluru-560 037, Also at: No.166, 3rd Main, Rajanna Colony, Opp:Basavanagar Bus Stand, Bengaluru-560 037, **(2) M/s. Associate Dwellings Private Limited,** Rep. by its Director and Authorized Signatory, Sri Subhash Sreedaran, Having its Regd. office at: #302, 3rd Floor, Devatha Plaza, Residency Road, Bengaluru-560 025 **(3) Sri Subhash Sreedaran,** S/o Sri Appu Sreedharan, Director, M/s. Value Bazaar Traders Pvt. Ltd., & Director & Authorized Signatory of M/s. Associate Dwelling Private Limited, No.100, Shrusti, 5th Cross, Ramesh Nagar, Bengaluru-560 037 **(4) Smt. Sreepriya Rajesh,** W/o Rajesh.P.K, Director, M/s. Value Bazaar Traders Pvt. Ltd., No.100, Shrusti, 5th Cross, Ramesh Nagar, Bengaluru-560 037 **(Borrowers & Guarantors)**	All that piece and parcel of Villa No.1 to 4, 7 to 24, 26, 27, 30 to 36, 38 to 41, 44 to 47, 49 to 54, 56 to 67, 70 to 80, 85 to104. Total 87 Villas (Details of each villas are mentioned below) the entire project is named as "CASTLETON GREEN" formed as per the Layout plan approved by Anekal Planning Authority, carved out of converted land bearing Sy.No.69, measuring 2 Acres 02 Guntas, Sy. No. 73 measuring 1 Acres 03 Guntas, Sy.No.74 measuring13 Guntas, Sy. No. 74 measuring I3 Guntas, Sy. No. 74 measuring 14 guntas, Sy. No. 74 measuring 12 Guntas and Sy. No. 74 measuring 12 Guntas, Sy No.76 measuring 1 Acres 24 Guntas (converted as per Conversion Orders of Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, bearing No.ALN(AJ)SR/61/2014-15 dated 16.01.2014, bearing No.ALN(AJ)SR/99/2014-15 dated 16.03.2015 and bearing No.ALN(AJ)SR/02/2014-15 dated 05.09.2014) totally measuring 06 Acres 13 Guntas situated at Hennagara village, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, all the above said lands are abating to each other forming a compact block and together bounded as follows: East by: Sy.No.77, West by: Sy.No.71,65&64, North by: Sy.No.75&Nala, South by: Sy.67,68,70,72 and 45 meters Road.	**Rs. 78,43,00,000/- (Rupees Seventy Eight Crore Forty Three Lakh Only)** **E.M.D. Rs.70,00,000/- (Rupees Seventy Lakh Only)**	**Rs. 77,30,10,530/- (Rupees Seventy Seven Crore Thirty Lakh Ten Thousand Five Hundred and Thirty Only) as on 12.03.2026**	**Date: 07.04.2026 at 11.30 AM** **Head Office No.1, "Uthunga", Pampamahakavi Road, Chamarajpet, Bengaluru - 560018**

Particulars of Individual Villas

Sl No.	Villa No. PID No.	Dimension in Sq.Ft	Boundaries(Schedules)				
		Sital Area in Sq Ft	Super Built Up Area	E	W	N	S
1.	1 150200103200900742	2000	2581	Road	Villa 16	Road	Villa 2
2.	2 150200103200900743	2000	2581	Road	Villa 15	Villa 01	Villa 3
3.	3 150200103200900745	2000	2443	Road	Villa 14	Villa 2	Villa 4
4.	4 150200103200900747	2000	2581	Road	Villa 13	Villa 3	Villa 5
5.	7 150200103200900750	2000	2581	Road	Villa 10	Villa 6	Villa 8
6.	8 150200103200900751	2000	2581	Road	Villa 9	Villa 7	Road
7.	9 150200103200900752	1600	2258	Villa 8	Road	Villa 10	Road
8.	10 150200103200900753	1600	2258	Villa 7	Road	Villa 11	Villa 9
9.	11 150200103200900755	1600	2258	Villa 6	Road	Villa 12	Villa 10
10.	12 150200103200900756	1600	2258	Villa 5	Road	Villa 13	Villa 11
11.	13 150200103200900757	1600	2258	Villa 4	Road	Villa 14	Villa 12
12.	14 150200103200900759	1600	2258	Villa 3	Road	Villa 15	Villa 13
13.	15 150200103200900760	1600	2200	Villa 2	Road	Villa 16	Villa 14
14.	16 150200103200900761	1600	2150	Villa 01	Road	Road	Villa 15
15.	17 150200103200900762	1200	1920	Road	Villa 36	Road	Villa 18
16.	18 150200103200900763	1200	1920	Road	Villa 35	Villa 17	Villa 19
17.	19 150200103200900764	1200	1920	Road	Villa 34	Villa 18	Villa 20
18.	20 150200103200900765	1200	1920	Road	Villa 33	Villa 19	Villa 21
19.	21 150200103200900766	1200	1920	Road	Villa 32	Villa 20	Villa 22
20.	22 150200103200900767	1200	1920	Road	Villa 31	Villa 21	Villa 23
21.	23 150200103200900768	1200	1920	Road	Villa 30	Villa 22	Villa 24
22.	26 150200103200900771	1200	1920	Road	Villa 27	Villa 25	Road
23.	27 150200103200900772	1200	1920	Villa 26	Road	Villa 28	Road
24.	30 150200103200900776	1200	1909	Villa 23	Road	Villa 31	Villa 29
25.	31 150200103200900778	1200	1909	Villa 22	Road	Villa 32	Villa 30
26.	32 150200103200900779	1200	1909	Villa 21	Road	Villa 33	Villa 31
27.	33 150200103200900780	1200	1909	Villa 20	Road	Villa 34	Villa 32
28.	34 150200103200900781	1200	1909	Villa 19	Road	Villa 35	Villa 33
29.	35 150200103200900782	1200	1909	Villa 18	Road	Villa 36	Villa 34
30.	36 150200103200900783	1200	1909	Villa 17	Road	Road	Villa 35
31.	38 150200103200900785	1200	1920	Road	Villa 53	Villa 37	Villa 39
32.	39 150200103200900786	1200	1920	Road	Villa 52	Villa 38	Villa 40
33.	40 150200103200900787	1200	1920	Road	Villa 51	Villa 39	Villa 41
34.	41 150200103200900789	1200	1920	Road	Villa 50	Villa 40	Villa 42
35.	44 150200103200900792	1200	1920	Road	Villa 47	Villa 43	Villa 45
36.	45 150200103200900795	1600	2497	Road	Villa 46	Villa 44	Road
37.	46 150200103200900796	1600	2257	Villa 45	Road	Villa 47	Road
38.	47 150200103200900797	1200	1909	Villa 44	Road	Villa 48	Villa 46
39.	49 150200103200900799	1200	1909	Villa 42	Road	Villa 50	Villa 48
40.	50 150200103200900800	1200	1909	Villa 41	Road	Villa 51	Villa 49
41.	51 150200103200900801	1200	1909	Villa 40	Road	Villa 52	Villa 50
42.	52 150200103200900802	1200	1909	Villa 39	Road	Villa 53	Villa 51
43.	53 150200103200900803	1200	1909	Villa 38	Road	Villa 37	Villa 52
44.	54 150200103200900804	1200	1909	Road	Villa 67	Road	Villa 55
45.	56 150200103200900806	1200	1950	Road	Villa 65	Villa 55	Villa 57
46.	57 150200103200900809	1200	1950	Road	Villa 64	Villa 56	Villa 58
47.	58 150200103200900810	1200	1950	Road	Villa 63	Villa 57	Villa 59
48.	59 150200103200900811	1200	1950	Road	Villa 62	Villa 58	Villa 60
49.	60 150200103200900812	1200	1950	Road	Villa 61	Villa 59	Road
50.	61 150200103200900813	1200	1950	Villa 60	Road	Villa 62	Road
51.	62 150200103200900814	1200	1950	Villa 59	Road	Villa 63	Villa 61
52.	63 150200103200900815	1200	1950	Villa 58	Road	Villa 64	Villa 62
53.	64 150200103200900816	1200	1950	Villa 57	Road	Villa 65	Villa 63
54.	65 150200103200900817	1200	1950	Villa 56	Road	Villa 66	Villa 64
55.	66 150200103200900819	1200	1950	Villa 55	Road	Villa 67	Villa 65
56.	67 150200103200900820	1200	1950	Villa 54	Road	Road	Villa 66
57.	70 150200103200900823	1200	1950	Road	Villa 81	Villa 69	Villa 71
58.	71 150200103200900825	1200	1950	Road	Villa 80	Villa 70	Villa 72
59.	72 150200103200900826	1200	1950	Road	Villa 79	Villa 71	Villa 73
60.	73 150200103200900827	1200	1950	Road	Villa 78	Villa 72	Villa 74
61.	74 150200103200900828	1200	1950	Road	Villa 77	Villa 73	Villa 75
62.	75 150200103200900829	1200	1950	Road	Villa 76	Villa 74	Road
63.	76 150200103200900830	1200	1950	Villa 75	Road	Villa 77	Road
64.	77 150200103200900831	1200	1950	Villa 74	Road	Villa 78	Villa 76
65.	78 150200103200900832	1200	1950	Villa 73	Road	Villa 79	Villa 77
66.	79 150200103200900833	1200	1909	Villa 72	Road	Villa 80	Villa 78
67.	80 150200103200900834	1200	1909	Villa 71	Road	Villa 81	Villa 79
68.	85 150200103200900839	1200	1909	Road	Villa 100	Road	Villa 86
69.	86 150200103200900840	1200	1909	Road	Villa 99	Villa 85	Villa 87
70.	87 150200103200900841	1200	1909	Road	Villa 98	Villa 86	Villa 88
71.	88 150200103200900842	1200	1909	Road	Villa 97	Villa 87	Villa 89
72.	89 150200103200900843	1200	1909	Road	Villa 96	Villa 88	Villa 90
73.	90 150200103200900844	1200	1909	Road	Villa 95	Villa 89	Villa 91
74	91 150200103200900845	1200	1909	Road	Villa 94	Villa 90	Villa 92
75.	92 150200103200900846	1996	2806	Road	Villa 93	Villa 91	Road
76.	93 150200103200900847	1996	2806	Villa 92	Road	Villa 94	Road
77.	94 150200103200900848	1200	1909	Villa 91	Road	Villa 95	Villa 93
78.	95 150200103200900849	1200	1909	Villa 90	Road	Villa 96	Villa 94
79.	96 150200103200900850	1200	1909	Villa 89	Road	Villa 97	Villa 95
80.	97 150200103200900851	1084	1755	Villa 88	Road	Villa 98	Villa 96
81.	98 150200103200900852	981	1601	Villa 87	Road	Villa 99	Villa 97
82.	99 150200103200900853	931	1552	Villa 86	Road	Villa 100	Villa 98
83.	100 150200103200900854	1136	1841	Villa 85	Road	Road	Villa 99
84.	101 150200103200900855	909	1514	Road	Villa 104	Road	Villa 102
85.	102 150200103200900856	913	1600	Road	Villa 103	Villa 101	Road
86.	103 150200103200900857	912	1580	Villa 102	Road	Villa 104	Road
87.	104 150200103200900858	905	1616	Villa 101	Road	Road	Villa 103

Terms and Conditions of Auction Sale: - **(1)** The Tender form can be collected from **The Karnataka State Co-Operative Apex Bank Ltd., No.1, "UTHUNGA", Pampamahakavi Road, Chamrajpet, Bengaluru-560018, (Ph.080-26983700, 26983722, 22976600)** on all working days during office hours. **(2)** The intending bidders should submit their bids in the prescribed tender form in closed cover along with EMD by means of Demand Draft / Banker's Cheque / Pay Order drawn in favour of **The Karnataka State Co-Operative Apex Bank Ltd., Bengaluru** - payable at Bengaluru. The Demand Draft / Banker's Cheque / Pay Order shall be drawn after the date of publication of this Auction Sale Notice through Tenders. **(3)** Tenders not in the prescribed format will not be accepted. The tender along with the EMD shall be submitted at The Karnataka State Co-Operative Apex Bank Ltd., Bengaluru latest by **06.04.2026 before 5.00 p.m.** Tender without EMD shall be summarily rejected. **(4)** The property "WILL NOT BE" sold below the reserve price. **(5)** In case the bidder is not successful the EMD amount will be refunded without interest. **(6)** The EMD amount shall be liable for forfeiture without prior notice, if the bidder including successful bidder fails to adhere to the terms and conditions of the Auction Sale. **(7)** The sealed tenders will be opened by the Authorised Officer in the presence of the available / attending bidders on **07.04.2026 at 11.30 a.m.(8)** The successful bidder shall deposit 25% of the Sale Price (inclusive of EMD) immediately after the auction sale, on the same day, by Demand Draft/Pay Order/ RTGS/NEFT and the balance of the Sale Price should be paid within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale. In case of default by the successful bidder, all the amounts deposited till then shall be forfeited without notice and the property will be put for re-auction. **(9)** The successful bidder shall bear the statutory dues / taxes / charges / property tax / E B charges / water charges / conveyance charges such as stamp duty, registration fee etc. that is required to be paid in order to get the property conveyed in his favour, as per the applicable laws. **(10)** The Authorised Officer has absolute right to accept or reject any or all of the tender or/ bid / offer and / or adjourn / postpone / cancel the Auction Sale without assigning any reason, and also to modify any or all terms and conditions of the sale without prior notice. **(11)** The sale is subject to confirmation by the Bank. **(12)** The property can be inspected by the intending bidder between **10.00 a.m to 5.00 p.m** at his expenses at the address mentioned in the Schedule.**(13)** The property is put for sale on **"AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" and "AS IS WHAT IS CONDITION".** The intending bidder shall satisfy himself about the title, ownership, statutory approvals, encumbrances etc. of the property.

For further details the intending bidders may contact the Authorised Officer, The Karnataka State Co-Operative Apex Bank Ltd., No. 1, "UTHUNGA", Pampamahakavi Road, Chamrajpet, Bengaluru-560018 for ascertaining the details of property and also for inspection of property (Ph.080-26983700, 26983722, 22976600) E-Mail id: recoverycell@karnatakaapex.com.

Place: Bengaluru
Date : 12.03.2026

Sd/- Authorised Officer
The Karnataka State Co-operative Apex Bank Limited

VIJAYANAGARA CLUB

Vijayanagara, Bangalore-560104. Ph: 080-2330 0675, 96060 38126

V.Club/Admin/2025-26 DATE : 12.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Sealed Tenders are invited from experienced reputed, licensed caterers (Regd. With PF/ESI/FSSAI) for providing **"Catering Services"** to Vijayanagara Club Members/Guests. Interested caterers may submit comparative bids with relevant experience. On or before **25th March 2026.** Contact details. Mob. **9606098126**

Sd/- Secretary, Vijayanagara Club.

'RAJENDRA SINHJI ARMY OFFICERS' INSTITUTE

(HQ K & K Sub Area Officers Mess Annexe)
50 MG Road, Bangalore - 560 001

TENDER NOTIFICATIONS

SEALED TENDERS ARE INVITED FROM REPUTED VENDORS & SUPPLIERS TO PROVIDE GROCERY, VEGETABLE, FRESH DAIRY PRODUCTS, BAKERY PRODUCT, MEAT ITEMS (MUTTON, CHICKEN, FISH), CHARCOAL & KITCHEN MAINT ITEMS INCL PACKING MATERIALS ON DEMAND BASIS TO RSAOI BANGALORE. RFP ARE AVAILABLE AT **https://rsaoibangalore.in/download/**

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH (DME), MEGHALAYA GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA PASTEUR HILLS, SHILLONG

Email ID: pasteurinstituteshil@gmail.com Tel No. 0364-2591510 / 94851 06663

No.DHSME&R/SMC/H.Res/148/2025-26/1144 Dtd: Shillong, the 11th March, 2026

NOTICE

The office of the Director of Health Services Medical Education & Research (DME) invites applications from eligible In-Service Doctors for the post of **Assistant Professors, Senior Resident** and **Tutor / Demonstrator** in various disciplines at Shillong Medical College.

Interested and eligible candidates are requested to visit the following website for detailed information:

https://www.meghealth.gov.in

Date and time of Interview will be intimidated accordingly.

Sd/-
Director of Health Services
Medical Education & Research (DME),
Pasteur Hills, Meghalaya, Shillong

MIPR No. : 3018
Dated : 11-03-2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that we are investigating the rights, title and ownership in respect of the properties more particularly described in the Schedule Property. Our client is desirous of dealing with the developers of lands more particularly described in the Schedule hereunder and hereinafter referred to as the "**Schedule Property**". Any person or persons or entities including any lender/bank/financial institution having any objection, any claims, rights, title, estate, or interest in respect of the Schedule Property or any part thereof, by way of inheritance, mortgage, sale, agreement for sale, transfer, assignment, lease, sub-lease, license, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, gift, acquisition, requisition, any encumbrance or beneficial right / interest under any trust, right of prescription or pre-emption or under any agreement or other disposition or under any suit, decree, injunction order or attachment or award passed by any Court or Authority litigation i.e. any suit, dispute, petition, appeal or any other like proceedings or any other, lis-pendens, decree or order of any adjudicating authority, exchange, partition, power of attorney, will, bequest, FSI or TDR, project manager, development manager, tenancy, development rights, partnership, family arrangement / settlement, possession, allotment, or otherwise howsoever ("**Claim**"), are hereby requested to make the same known in writing along with complete documentary proof to the undersigned within a period of 15 (fifteen) days from the date of publication hereof, failing which, it shall be presumed that no such Claim exists and if it exists, it shall be deemed that the claimant has relinquished such Claim and/or waived any right to exercise such Claim.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Item No 1:
All that piece and parcel of non-agricultural land converted for residential purposes comprising immovable property bearing Survey Nos 22/5 and 22/6 measuring in aggregate 01 acre 20 guntas (i.e., *approximately 65,340 square feet*), situated in Geddalahalli Village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk and bounded as follows:

East by : Survey No 22/1;
West by : Survey No 22/2 and Road;
North by : Land belonging to Gowramma; and
South by : Survey No 22/7.

Item No 2:
All that piece and parcel of immovable property bearing Municipal No 733, located at 8th Main Road, JP Nagar 3rd Phase, Bangalore bearing PID No 57-148-733 measuring an extent of 4250 square feet, and bounded as follows:

East by : Site No 702;
West by : Road ;
North by : Site No 734; and
South by : Site No 732.

Item No 3:
All that piece and parcel of non-agricultural land converted for residential purposes comprising immovable property bearing Survey No 2/4 (Part), measuring an extent of 01 acre 10 guntas (i.e., *approximately 54,450 square feet*) situated in Rachenahalli Village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk and bounded as follows:

East by : Survey No 1;
West by : Survey No 2/3 ;
North by : Survey No 1 and Road; and
South by : Survey No 2/4 (Part).

Date : 13-03-2026
Place : Bengaluru

Kartik Shiv Kumar, Advocate
Khaitan & Co
Embassy Quest 3rd Floor, #45/1 Magrath Road, Bengaluru – 560 025

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TENDER NOTICE NO. CN/02/2026 DATE : 04/03/2026

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Deputy Chief Materials Manager / Construction
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PUB/973/AAS/PRB/SWR/2025-26

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Crest gates of all 5-decade-old dams to be replaced this yr

BENGALURU DHNS: The crest gates of all 50-year-old dams will be replaced this year, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar has said.

Replying to the issue raised by JD(S) MLC T A Sharavana during Zero Hour in the Legislative Council, Shivakumar said that it began with Tungabhadra dam. "All the crest gates of TB dam will be replaced by May this year. It requires about seven days to replace one crest gate and as per the information 14 gates have been replaced till March 10."

He disclosed that the government had entered into an agreement with Ahmedabad-based Hardware Toll and Machinery Project Company to replace all the crest gates of the dam at a cost of Rs 34.48 cr within 15 months. Fabrication work on 25 crest gates is completed and two more gates are being fabricated, he added.

Shivakumar informed the House that Andhra Pradesh was taking part in the talks over Navali balancing reservoir. "We cannot take unilateral decisions in this regard. All the three riparian states have to discuss the issue. Water is currently flowing into the sea and we can harness this if all parties support politically."

The DCM said that he, Industries Minister M B Patil and Law Minister H K Patil will soon travel to New Delhi for a meeting with Karnataka MPs over the objections raised by Andhra government on the Upper Krishna Project.

KPSC row rocks Assembly, Priyank calls for abolition

Exams marred by allegations of irregularities: Sunil Kumar

BENGALURU, DHNS

Allegations of corruption and persistent irregularities in the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) triggered an intense debate in the Legislative Assembly on Thursday, with members seeking reforms and IT minister Priyank Kharge calling for abolition of the tainted Commission.

BJP member V Sunil Kumar who initiated the debate, urged the state government to intervene even though KPSC is an autonomous body. "The government cannot turn a blind eye to alleged irregularities. Lakhs of youths, particularly from rural areas, aspire to secure government jobs and spend years preparing for competitive examinations. However, the current system is killing the aspirations of the youth," Sunil Kumar said.

Recalling past controversies, he stated that the assistant executive engineer (AEE) exam had OMR sheet issue, FDA recruitment had unknown persons evaluating answer scripts and PDO recruitment saw examination malpractices.

"As many as 5,000 candidates appeared for the latest probationary officers' exams for filling 384 posts. Lakhs of students write the Common Entrance Test without a controversy, but KPSC examinations are always marred by allegations of irregularities. This time, 11 candidates in the same exam room clearing the exams has raised suspicion. Candidates wrote to the KPSC secretary on May 7, 2025 alleging that the seals of answer scripts bundles were open before the exam. What is the status of the report sought by the chief secretary?," Sunil Kumar sought to know. He demanded that the interviews scheduled for March 23 be halted and the and allegations be probed.

Pointing to delays in recruitment cycles, sometimes up to three years after notifications, he said that such delays fuel allegations and anger among aspirants.

Questioning administrative instability within the commission, Sunil Kumar asked why secretaries were being changed four times in one recruitment cycle, but the controller remained the same. He sought implementation of Hota Committee report on Civil Services Reforms.

Former minister S Suresh Kumar said the issue was beyond politics and that legislators were united in seeking transparency. He alleged that KPSC had become a "holy cow" that no one dared question and demanded a "clean-up".

"The provisional list had names of KPSC members' children, three of a retired employee's family and an ex-minister's son," added Sunil Kumar.

Priyank acknowledged the "seriousness" of the allegations and said, "What surprises me is that they (KPSC) have no fear of law. Previously I had moved a private bill for prevention of corruption in government recruitments. Last year, our government enacted the Karnataka Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act to curb malpractice in recruitment examinations, which prescribes penalties of up to Rs 10 crore and imprisonment of up to 10 years for paper leaks. Fed up with the KPSC, I entrusted my department recruitment to the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) to ensure transparency. I personally feel KPSC should be abolished as they are not afraid of the law, the judiciary or the legislature."

Priyank also expressed concern over the quality of some recruits, who, he said, lacked basic knowledge.

Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka said Karnataka had far more members in its public service commission compared to states like Uttar Pradesh, suggesting the large number of members created room for corruption.

BJP MLA Araga Jnanendra called for introspection over the process of appointing the KPSC chairman and members.

According to Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka, Karnataka has far more members in public service commission compared to states like Uttar Pradesh, suggesting the number created room for corruption. DH FILE PHOTO

Declared my assets, says KPSC chief

Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) chairperson Shivashankarappa S Sahukar on Thursday said he has declared all his financial details, including assets and liabilities, to Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot.

Sahukar said this in a statement on a day when KPSC came under heavy attack by lawmakers across party lines in the Assembly. Sahukar was apoointed as KPSC chairperson in April 2021. In his statement, Sahukar said he has submitted details of his salary and other allowances between 2018-19 and 2024-25.

"I have also declared details of assets, liabilities, balance sheets and capital accounts of me and my family," he stated.

Animal population rising, but forests have shrunk, says Khandre

BENGALURU, DHNS

The state government told the Assembly on Thursday that the population of tigers and elephants has increased while forest cover has decreased, contributing to human-animal conflict.

"In 1972, Bandipur had 12 tigers. Now, there are 175 tigers," Forest, Ecology & Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre said. "Forest cover isn't increasing proportionately with the rise in animal population," Khandre said. "In fact, forests have shrunk. We're trying to save forests."

The minister was responding to Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka who asked the government to clarify if the decision to halt safaris had brought down human-animal conflict. In November 2025, the government stopped safaris at Bandipur and Nagarhole tiger reserves following a spate of attacks by wild animals. Last month, the government decided to lift the safari ban.

"Yes, lots of tourists come for the safaris. Livelihoods were also lost; there was a loss of Rs 6-8 crore. But we wanted to save lives," Khandre said.

Bandipur has a periphery of 314 km of which 100 km is a conflict zone, Khandre said. "We have 25 anti-poaching camps and round-the-clock patrols. We've set up a command centre. Drone cameras and other facilities have been provided," he said.

There are some 70 villages around Bandipur where the government will use 35% of the income from safaris on education and livelihood improvement, Khandre said.

Attacks by elephants are also rising, Khandre said, replying to Malavalli Congress MLA PM Narendraswamy. "There are several reasons for this. The elephant population has increased. The elephant corridor got fragmented due to various development works such as expressways," he said.

The government is erecting 116 km of railway barricades at a cost of Rs 201 crore, Khandre said. "We're also taking up other mitigation measures like tentacle fencing. We also have an elephant task force and a leopard task force," he said.

Trek timings

Sullya BJP MLA Bhagirathi Murulya asked Khandre to allow the Kumara Parvatha trek, one of the toughest trails in the Western Ghats, to start at 5.30 am instead of the current 6 am. Khandre accepted this demand.

"The Subramanya-Kumara Parvatha is a 24-km, 2-day trek. Earlier, the trek started at 6 am and people had to camp at one location that had no basic facilities coupled with wildlife movement," Khandre said.

"Now, the 14-km Beedahalli-Kumara Parvatha trek takes seven hours. The 19-km Beedahalli-Kumara Parvatha-Subramaya needs 10-12 hours. The Subramanya-Shesha Parvatha-Subramanya is 20 km. Those who start at 6 am have to return before 6 pm. This will be changed to 5.30 am," he said.

'Govt planning to close 270 PHCs'

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Opposition BJP went after Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao in the Assembly on Thursday over the functioning of his department, particularly the shortage of medicines and doctors.

"The health minister is healthy, but his department is sick," Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka said, seeking to move an adjournment motion that Speaker U T Khader decided to convert into a discussion.

"Due to shortage of medicines, people across the state are facing problems," Ashoka said. "I have with me a list of 270 primary health centres (PHC) that the government is preparing to shut. Doctors are being shifted out. This has led to shortage in villages: no medicines, no doctors," he said.

Former deputy chief minister Dr CN Ashwath Narayan claimed that there was a "medical emergency" in the state.

Migrant workers in B'luru fret...

LPG shortage, From Page 1

"They charge for 5 kg, but it barely lasts 15 days. It feels like they are under-filling the canisters," he said.

"If we can't get gas, we have to use wood. It's a struggle every single day just to eat," said a labourer from Jharkhand.

Local dealers for brands like HP and Indane reportedly cite supply chain delays, but workers feel they are being exploited. For many, the rising cost of survival is becoming a reason to leave the city. "If the cost increases any more, many of us will have no choice but to go back to our villages," Shiva, another worker, said.

Mahanthesh, the Construction Workers' Union President told *DH* that most migrant workers live below the poverty line and are struggling with rising gas prices and supply shortages.

Since these workers rely on small hotels and street food vendors, many of which are on the verge of closing, their access to food is at risk. He said that the government should mandate builders or contractors to arrange a steady gas supply for the migrant labourers.

Govt may hike ration card income ceiling as costs rise

'Income limit set in 2017 must be re-examined'

BENGALURU, DHNS

The government told the Legislative Assembly on Thursday that it will consider setting a higher limit on the annual income of a family for the purpose of identifying Priority Households (PHH), which are given ration cards.

At present, a family's annual income has to be below Rs 1.2 lakh to be identified as a PHH.

"This income limit was fixed in 2017. We are now in 2026. There's a need to revise this. It must be re-examined," Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said while replying to Malleshwaram BJP MLA Dr C N Ashwath Narayan.

Rao was responding on behalf of Food and Civil Supplies Minister K H Muniyappa.

"The Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission, headed by (senior Congress lawmaker) R V Deshpande, has recommended increasing the income ceiling to Rs 3 lakh. The department will look into this," Rao, a former food and civil supplies minister, said.

Earlier, Narayan demanded a higher income limit as the cost of living in Bengaluru had increased.

Citing the Food Security Act, Narayan said that 50% of the urban population should get PHH or Antyodaya cards.

Karnataka has 1.24 crore households having the PHH or ration cards, Rao said.

"The Centre has identified 1.09 crore eligible families in Karnataka. But the state has exceeded this by 15.8 lakh families," Rao said.

He added that the '50% urban coverage' clause cited by Narayan was applicable to the entire country and not statewise. "In some rural areas, 95% of the population is covered," he said.

'Ration cards in demand'

The PHH or ration card, which is still referred to as the Below Poverty Line (BPL) card, is in demand as it has become the basis for "almost everything", Rao said.

"That's why even ineligible people have obtained the card, which should be used only for food supplies. However, people use the card to avail healthcare benefits," Rao said.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao makes a statement in the Legislative Assembly on Thursday.

DK youths not interested in police constable posts: HM

BENGALURU, DHNS: Home Minister G Parameshwara expressed displeasure over youths from Dakshina Kannada (DK) not coming forward to take up police constable posts.

Responding to a question by BJP MLC Kishore Kumar Puttur in the Legislative Council on Thursday, the home minister said that not even 10% applicants are from Dakshina Kannada during recruitments.

The minister said that constables posted to Dakshina Kannada are from North Karnataka districts and they struggle to learn Tulu.

"I really don't understand why youths from Dakshina Kannada are not interested in taking up police constable posts. Those appointed from other districts struggle to learn the language and after some years, they request to go back to their hometown," he added.

CAMARADERIE IN COUNCIL

Opposition Chief Whip N Ravikumar, Congress members K Shivakumar and Thippannappa Kamaknoor share a light moment in the Legislative Council on Thursday. DH PHOTO/PRASHANTH H G

Congress narrative on tax injustice fabricated, says BYV

BENGALURU, DHNS

BJP state president B Y Vijayendra on Thursday said in the Assembly that the Congress' claim on Karnataka facing injustice under tax devolution was 'a narrative built on fabricated claims'.

"In the last 2-3 years, the state government has repeatedly claimed that the Centre is treating Karnataka unfairly and that the state is being discriminated against. The slogan 'our tax, our right' has been raised many times both inside and outside the Assembly. Through advertisements, the government has tried to mislead people," Vijayendra said.

"It's often claimed that when Karnataka contributes 100 in taxes, only 15 comes back. When the government says Karnataka sends 4.3 lakh crore to the Centre, it includes both direct and indirect taxes," Vijayendra said.

Vijayendra said major companies like Infosys and Wipro are headquartered in Bengaluru. "They pay their entire countrywide corporate tax in Karnataka, even though their revenue is generated by consumers and employees across all of India. Therefore, not all the tax generated should be considered as originating solely from Karnataka," he argued.

"Under the Congress-led UPA government in 2014, Karnataka contributed 1.40 lakh crore to the central pool, but received only 28,000 crore through fund allocation," Vijayendra pointed out.

Maharashtra, Vijayendra said, gives 6.5 lakh crore to the divisible pool, but gets about 89,726 crore. "Even that amounts to 13–14 for every 100 contributed. Maharashtra is ruled by the NDA, and doesn't get 40-50 back for every 100," he said, adding that comparing Karnataka with states like Rajasthan or Uttar Pradesh is 'unscientific'.

Metro: K'taka promised 31k cr, released 27k cr, LS told

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu on Thursday informed Lok Sabha that the Karnataka government committed to provide Rs 31,534 crore for the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited(BMRCL) for various phases of works but has released Rs 27,184 crore till March 5, 2026.

Replying to BJP Bangalore Central Lok Sabha member P C Mohan's question, the minister said that though the state government had promised to provide 41.73% of total cost of projects taken up so far in different phases in various parts of the city, it is yet to release promised amount.

Iran's new leader vows to keep...

Mojtaba, From Page 1

In addition to attacking energy infrastructure around the region, Iran has a stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz, the waterway leading from the Persian Gulf toward the Indian Ocean through which a fifth of the world's oil is transported.

The Paris-based International Energy Agency warned the war could lead to to "the largest supply disruption" in history but US President Donald Trump said stopping the Islamic republic's "evil empire" was more important than crude prices.

Gulf states have borne the brunt of retaliatory attacks from Iran.

Images from Bahrain on Thursday showed thick smoke rising after a strike on fuel tanks in Muharraq, with residents told to stay inside and close their windows.

Drones caused damage again at Kuwait's international airport and in downtown Dubai, while Saudi Arabia said it had intercepted drones headed towards its Shaybah oil field and its embassy district.

With Gulf states slashing production and oil tankers stuck in the Gulf, benchmark oil prices have risen 40-50 percent since the US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28, threatening to crimp growth and stoke inflation.

Kodagu coffee grower killed in jumbo attack

SIDDAPURA (KODAGU DISTRICT), DHNS: A 49-year-old coffee grower was trampled to death by a wild elephant at his coffee plantation in Guhya village near Siddapur on Thursday.

The deceased was identified as Chaurira Ganapathi (49) of Guhya village.

Eyewitness told police that Ganapathi had gone to his coffee plantation around 11 am when an elephant attacked him. While trying to flee from the elephant, he fell on the ground and the elephant trampled him to death. The plantation supervisor Naushad narrowly escaped from the attack.

Officials from Forest Department, including Virajpet Range Forest Officer (RFO) Shivaram, visited the spot. Ganapathi was unmarried and was also employed in a private company.

Following the incident, representatives of various organisations and local residents staged a protest in front of the mortuary of Community Health Centre. Chief Conservator of Forests Sonali Vrishti reached the spot and held discussions with the protesters. The protestors recollected that five people had lost their lives in wild elephant attacks in the district.

Karnataka State Farmers' Association and Workers' Federation lodged a complaint at Siddapura police station alleging that the death occurred due to the negligence of forest officials.

Inter-dept meet to tackle...

Food contamination, From Page 1

Leader of the Opposition, R Ashoka, said the issue affected the city's population of nearly 1.6 crore and warned of serious health implications.

"Dialysis centres are coming up in every ward. You may advise people to wash vegetables in salt water or hot water, but how many of us actually do it? We need stronger measures," he said.

Ashoka alleged that eggs had high steroid content and that milk sold in the city contained traces of lead, as fodder grown along sewage drains was used to feed cattle. "During raids, we found 'chemical milk' from Andhra Pradesh being sold in the city," he said. He demanded a monitoring committee to address the issue.

Ashwath Narayan suggested the formation of an interdepartmental panel comprising officials from the health, agriculture, food safety, pollution control and horticulture departments to regularly check the quality of vegetables sold in markets. "It is alarming. Today, one in every two people in Bengaluru has fatty liver. Nervous system degeneration and stomach infections are rising. Sudden deaths due to body inflammation are also being reported," he said.

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre admitted that food contamination posed a major challenge and linked it partly to inadequate sewage treatment infrastructure.

"We have the capacity to treat about 1,200 MLD of sewage water, but need to treat nearly 1,800 MLD every day. Delay in setting up sewage treatment plants due to land constraints, polluted lakes, mounting solid waste, construction debris and single-use plastic are major challenges," he said.

Khandre said a long-term plan was needed and assured the House that a meeting chaired by DCM D K Shivakumar would soon be convened to gather suggestions from Bengaluru legislators and other stakeholders before framing guidelines.

Narayan also suggested tertiary treatment of sewage water and improved effluent treatment to curb contamination.

RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge said the Health department had already taken steps to monitor fastfood outlets to check the use of harmful colouring agents in kebabs and the use of plastic sheets while making idlis. "Since vegetables are grown in surrounding villages, awareness must be created among farmers. Pesticides, veterinary drugs, chemicals from food contact materials and cleaning agents can also lead to contamination," he said.

IT Plug & Play Centre in Belagavi soon: Priyank Kharge

BENGALURU, DHNS: Information Technology and Biotechnology (IT-BT) Minister Priyank Kharge assured the Legislative Council on Thursday that the IT Plug and Play Centre will be established in Belagavi as soon as the required space is available.

Responding to the issue raised by Congress MLC Nagaraj M during a calling attention motion, the minister said, "To fulfil the demands of the IT-BT and startups, I have directed the deputy commissioner of Belagavi district to identify a suitable place to establish the IT Plug and Play Centre."

Software exports

Meanwhile, the minister told the Assembly on Wednesday that software exports are likely to touch Rs 5.5 lakh crore in the fiscal ending this March. Software exports from the state stood at Rs 3.55 lakh crore in 2022-23, Rs 4.09 lakh crore in 2023-24 and Rs 4.58 lakh crore in 2024-25.

In his written reply, Priyank said 2,129 companies/startups commenced operations, creating 2.5 lakh jobs in the last three years.

Citizens lost Rs 5,473.97 cr to cyber criminals in 3 years: HM

BENGALURU, DHNS: The state government is working towards increasing the rate of conviction in cybercrime cases, Home Minister G Parameshwara told the Legislative Council on Thursday.

He said this while giving details about the cybercrime cases.

Parameshwara said, "The number of cases has come down after setting up a dedicated wing in the state. I agree that the conviction rate is low. We will concentrate on increasing the conviction rate, too."

He informed the House that the digital arrest cases have come down, though recovery is low.

He said, "Citizens in the state lost Rs 5,473.97 crore in 57,733 cybercrime cases in the last three years. The police have recovered Rs 730 crore. Even educated and technical experts are losing money to cyber fraud. So far, the highest amount lost to cyber fraud is Rs 32 crore by a person who was in the highest technical position at a private company."

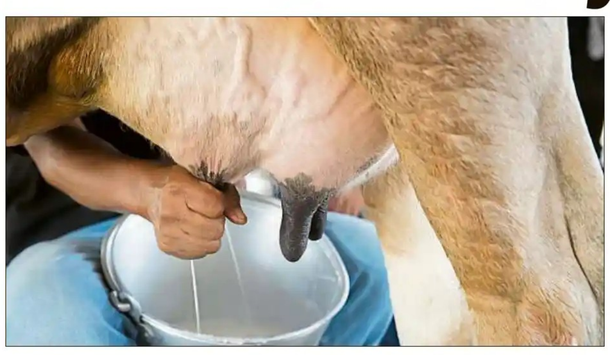
However, Parameshwara stated that the cybercrime cases have reduced in the state. "In 2024, 22,483 cases were reported. This number reduced to 14,899 in 2025," he added.

Giving a warning that nobody's bank account is safe, Parameshwara said.

"So far, we have seized 42,000 mule bank accounts used for cybercrime activities and arrested 500 plus involved in it," he added.

Milk adulteration: 3,049 cases registered across state last year

Among districts, Hassan has highest cases at 788



BENGALURU, DHNS

A total of 3,049 cases of milk adulteration have been reported in the state during 2025-26.

As per the details provided before the Legislative Council, Hassan reported the highest number of cases. Of the 1,64,431 milk samples collected, 788 cases of adulteration were found in the district.

"A total of 15,15,575 milk samples from 19 unions/units were collected. Hassan district recorded the highest cases with 788 samples found adulterated. Other districts with high adulteration cases are Ballari (588), Shivamogga (434), Mandya (418), and Kalaburagi (315)," Leader of the House N S Boseraju said on behalf of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

He was replying to a question by party MLC Madhu G Madegowda. The government said that adulteration was found in Dodla, a private milk brand which is available in Karnataka.

Meanwhile, no adulteration cases were found in Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Dakshina Kannada, Nandini Hi-Tech Product Plant (Channarayapatna), Nandini Hi-Tech Mega Powder Plant, Kanva (Ramanagara), and Mother Dairy.

Cases not registered

Although adulteration is a punishable offence with a minimum of 3 months' imprisonment and up to life imprisonment, no cases have been registered against those supplying adulterated milk to dairies. Instead, if adulteration is detected in milk supplied to district milk unions' cooperative societies, the milk is rejected, producers are made aware, and warnings are issued to the executive committees and staff to prevent recurrence. Authorities also promised to visit such societies periodically to test the milk.

It was reported that in primary milk producers' cooperative societies, producers were using salt and sugar to adulterate milk. To detect adulteration, testing kits have been provided to all such societies. Milk received from societies is also subjected to all types of testing at the dairy level.

Additionally, in KMF, a central vigilance team has been formed to detect adulteration in milk sold under the Nandini brand.

BAMUL announces Rs 60-crore profit

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bengaluru Cooperative Milk Union Ltd (BAMUL) has recorded a profit of Rs 60 crore for the current fiscal year, a contrast to the Rs 14.5 crore loss it incurred previously.

Announcing the results at a press conference held at the Bengaluru Dairy Office in the city on Thursday, BAMUL president D K Suresh attributed the success to administrative reforms and a substantial increase in milk procurement and turnover.

The Union's turnover, which stood at Rs 2,900 crore last year, is expected to touch Rs 3,400 crore by March 31. "We have managed to increase our turnover by nearly Rs 500 crore this year. Our daily milk procurement average has also risen by 1.5 lakh litres, reaching a total average of 16.5 lakh litres," Suresh said.

In a first-of-its-kind move since the BAMUL's inception in 1965, the Union has decided to distribute a 'Ugadi Gift' directly to the bank accounts of milk producers.

A total of Rs 59.39 crore has been earmarked as an incentive for 1,27,644 farmers. The incentive will be calculated at Re 1 per kg of milk supplied between April 1, 2025 and March 31, 2026.

Suresh announced implementation of AI-driven systems to track milk packaging and online booking for packets. The integration of NDDB software at society level now allows farmers to receive an automated SMS within one minute of pouring milk, detailing the weight, quality (fat content), and the exact amount credited to their account.

Govt to construct 100 'She' toilets in GBA limits

BENGALURU, DHNS: Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Thursday said that the government is constructing 100 new She (ladies) toilets in the Greater Bengaluru Area (GBA) and the number will be increased based on demand.

Replying to the question by Congress MLC Arathi Krishna, the deputy chief minister said, "There have been no complaints against public toilets charging excess fees and there is no report from any of the non-government organisations regarding the public toilets functioning under GBA."

The city already has 380 public toilets, and 191 new toilets are being constructed under Swatch Bharat Mission. Another 100 are coming up under Brand Bengaluru.

ARMY WELFARE EDUCATION SOCIETY (AWES CAMPUS)
NAGARESHWARA NAGENAHALLI, PO-KOTHANUR, BENGALURU-77
Web :www.aifd.edu.in and www.aihmctbangalore.edu.in

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

1. AWES Campus, Bengaluru-77, invites quotations from reputed Vendors for **"Provisioning of Acrylic Sports Surface for One Volley Ball Court at AWES Campus, N Nagenahalli, Kothanur Post, Bengaluru-560 077".**
2. The Request for Proposal (RFP) for detailed Scope of Work is available in our web site **www.aihmctbangalore.edu.in** and **www.aifd.edu.in**
3. **Contact Pers – Mr Sriram, 8903198392**

SHILLONG MEDICAL COLLEGE
Government of Meghalaya
Pasteur Hills, Lawmali Road, Shillong, Meghalaya - 793001
email: shgmc.director@gmail.com | website: shillongmedicalcollege.co.in

No. SMC-97/2026/Estt./HR/02/ Dated, Shillong the, 12th March 2026

ROLLING ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POST OF PROFESSOR AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

The Shillong Medical College under Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Meghalaya, invites applications from eligible candidates for the posts of **Professors/ Associate Professors** on a contractual basis in various disciplines for Shillong Medical College. **Preference may be given to eligible in-service candidates**.

Eligible candidates who wish to attend the interview must submit a scanned copy of the application form (Annexure - I) along with supporting documents to the e-mail address: **shgmedicalcollege@gmail.com** latest by **05:00 pm on 21st March 2026**, with the subject line of e-mail **"Application for the Position of Professor and Associate Professor at Shillong Medical College, Shillong"**.

- **In-service candidates eligible for the post may send their applications along with supporting documents by post to the O/o the Director of Health Services Medical Education & Research (DME), Health Complex, MMSRB Building (top floor) Nongkynrih Laitumkhrah, Shillong or smcfacultyrecruitment25@gmail.com no later than 5:00 PM on 21st March 2026**.

Department	Professors	Associate Professors
1. Anatomy	-	1
2. Physiology	1	1
3. Pharmacology	1	Nil
4. Pathology	1	Nil
5. Microbiology	1	1
6. Forensic Medicine	1	Nil
7. Obstetrics & Gynaecology	1	1
8. Anaesthesia	1	Nil
9. Orthopaedics		1

Interested and eligible candidates may look up on the details of the advertisement in the government website: meghealth.gov.in

Date and time of the interview will be intimated accordingly.

Sd/- **(Dr Nicola C. Lyngdoh Iangrai)**
Director
Shillong Medical College, Government of Meghalaya

MIPR No.: 3038
Dated: 12-03-2026

Department of Agriculture Marketing
AGRICULTURE PRODUCE MARKET COMMITTEE TALIKOTE
No:Amd:APMC(t)/Dev/497/2025-26 Date:07.03.2026

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

1) Name of Work: CONSTRUCTION C.C. ROAD AND DRAIN AT MAIN MARKET YARD OF APMC TALIKOTE UNDER RIDF-31 SCHEME-2025-26.
Amount put to Tender Rs. 4,15,53,781=00 (Excluding GST). E.M.D. Amount Rs.6,24,000=00
The above development works approved under RIDF-31 Scheme-2025-26, Interested and eligible contractors are invited to submit bids through the e-Procurement System (E-Portal) the last date and time for submissions of tenders is 15.04.2026 up to 5.30PM. For further details please visit the website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- Secretary APMC Talikote **Sd/- Administrator APMC Talikote**
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/794/ಕೆಎಸ್.ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

Karnataka State
Office of the Executive Engineer, Shimoga Division, Shimoga
No.EE/PWD/Smg/AE-2/IFT-62/2025-26 Dtd: 12-03-2026

Short Term Tender Notification -2 Cover system

Tender invited through E-Procurement version-2 kppp.karnataka.gov.in for the below Indents by Eligible Consultants For needful information please contact Office P.No. 08182 274942 and Helpdesk Ph Nos. 080-25501216/ 080-25501227)

Tender documents down loading & submission dates:12-03-2026 to 20-03-2026 3054-03-337-0-05-200 SH Maintenance 1 Hosanagara Subdivision 2 Work (I.No: 34276) (I.No: 34363)

Tender documents down loading & submission dates: (I.No: 34276) -Periods to complete the work is up to: 09 Months (Including Mansoon) (I.No: 34363) -Periods to complete the work is up to: 06 Months (Including Mansoon). If there any changes in published tenders it will be publishing in E-Procurement version-2 kppp.karnataka.gov.in Website only

Sd/- EE, PW Dept Division, Shimoga
DIPR/smg/ksmca/25-26/87/03/2005

Government of Karnataka
Agriculture Marketing Deparment
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE MARKET COMMITTEE,
Nehru Gunj, Kalaburagi – 585 104, E-mail : apmckalburgi@gmail.com Ph: 08472-257469
No.AMD/APMC/KLB/ S&CTP/ 2266/2025-26 Dated: 10-03-2026

:: CORRINGENDUM ::

Kalaburagi Agricultural Produce Market Committee e-Procurement INDENT No.: APMC/KLB/SEC2025-26/Security Gard 0826 & APMC/KLB/SEC2025-26/Cleaning 08278 Addition/ Amendment Section 3 (B) Financial Tender Condition Contractors/Agencies shall enter Service Charge in Percentage only. Contractors shall enter Service Charge on Basic & VDA only and Service Charge shall not be less than 5%. And the last date of submission of tender 16-03-2026 change to 23-03-2026, date of opening technical bid 18-03-2026 change to 25-03-2026, date of financial bid 20-03-2026 change to 27-03-2026 for placing tender has been extended.

Sd/- Secretary APMC Kalburgi
DIPR/Kalaburagi/1165/KSMC&A/2025-26

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Shivajinagar Division, Thimmaiah Road, Queens Road, Bengaluru.
No. EE/SJN/E-PROC/25/2025-26 Date: 12-03-2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER
TWO COVER (Only through GoK KPP Portal)

The Executive Engineer, Shivajinagar Division, BCCC, Bengaluru on behalf the Commissioner, BCCC invites item rate tenders from eligible contractors registered in BCCC or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Govt. Organisations for the following works.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Providing PMC for Construction of Kalyani, Rock Fill Bund in Ulsoor Lake, Bengaluru Urban District.
	Amount put to tender: **Rs. 728.75 lakhs.** EMD: **Rs. 75,000/-**. Stipulated period of completion : **06 months.**

Calendar of Events: **(1)** Tender documents may be downloaded from KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from 13.03.2026, 11.00 hrs. (2)** Date of Pre-bid meeting : **23.03.2026 at 4.00 pm. (3)** Last date for submission of tender documents: **30.03.2026 upto 4.00 pm. (4)** Date of opening of Bids : **01.04.2026 at 11.00 am.** Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours or from KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Shivajinagar Division, BCCC

FORM A
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
(Under Regulation 6 of the IBBI (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CREDITORS OF VOI JEANS RETAIL INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED

RELEVANT PARTICULARS		
1.	Name of corporate debtor	**VOI JEANS RETAIL INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED**
2.	Date of incorporation of corporate debtor	22nd July 2011
3.	Authority under which corporate debtors are incorporated / registered	ROC- Karnataka-Incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956
4.	Corporate Identity No.	U52321KA2011PTC059681
5.	Address of the registered office and principal office (if any) of corporate debtor	Registered address: No. 5AC-722 &724, 3rd Floor HRBR Layout, 1st Block, Bengaluru-560043
6.	Insolvency commencement date in respect of corporate debtor	09th March 2026 (Order copy received on 11th March 2026)
7.	Estimated date of closure of insolvency resolution process	05th September 2026
8.	Name and registration number of the insolvency professional acting as Interim Resolution Professional (IRP)	Ranjana Singh IBBI/IPA-002/IP-N01181/2021-2022/13968
9.	Address and e-mail of the Interim Resolution Professional, as registered with the Board	Ranjana Singh Second Floor, House bearing number 53/7, Near Anjaneya Temple Street, Yediyur, 6th Block Jayanagar, Bengaluru- 560070 Email: ranjana@beleyur.com
10.	Address and e-mail to be used for correspondence with the Interim Resolution Professional (IRP)	Ranjana Singh No. 428, 19th B Cross, 3rd Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru-560 011 Tele: +91 80 26540193 Email:CIRP-voijeans@beleyur.in
11.	Last date for submission of claims	27th March 2026
12.	Classes of creditors, if any, under clause (b) of sub-section (6A) of section 21, ascertained by the IRP	Not Applicable
13.	Names of Insolvency Professionals identified to act as Authorised Representative of creditors in a class	Not Applicable
14.	(a) Relevant Forms and (b) Details of authorised representatives are available at:	(a) Web linkhttps://www.ibbi.gov.in/home/downloads (b) Not Applicable

Notice is hereby given that the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Bengaluru has ordered the commencement of a Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process of VOI Jeans Retail India Private Limited under CIRP on 09th March 2026. (Order received on 11.03.2026.)

The creditors of VOI Jeans Retail India Private Limited under CIRP are hereby called upon to submit their claims with proof on or before 27th March 2026 to the Interim Resolution Professional at the address mentioned against entry No.10.

The financial creditors shall submit their claims with proof by electronic means only. All other creditors may submit the claims with proof in person, by post or by electronic means.

Submission of false or misleading proofs of claim shall attract penalties

Sd/-
Ranjana Singh
the Interim Resolution Professional of
VOI Jeans Retail India Private Limited under CIRP

Date: 12th March 2026
Place: Bengaluru

Government of Karnataka
BIDAR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, BIDAR.
(Autonomous Institution of Govt. of Karnataka)
Affiliated to Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka, Bangalore & Recognized by Govt. of India, New Delhi
Phone: 08482 228366/ Fax No: 08482 240322 Website: http://bimsbidar.karnataka.gov.in & e-mail : directorbrimsbidar2007@gmail.com

No :Brims/Tender/News Paper/CR-/2025-26 **Date :27-02-2026**

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Bidar Institute of Medical Sciences, Bidar Invites e-tender from eligible bidders for the SUPPLY OF MEDICAL BOOKS TO SC-ST STUDENTS UNDER SCP/TSP SCHEME BUDGET BRIMS BIDAR iterested bidder can view, download and apply through ktpp portal www.kppp.karnataka.gov only for more information about can be contact/view at our website www.bimsbidar.karnataka.gov.in Last date for submission of tender through ktpp portal is **18-03-2026** at the specified in e-tender.
1) **Tender Indent No:-** DME/2025-26/IND2110, 2) **Name of the Tender:-** SUPPLY OF MEDICAL BOOKS TO SC-ST STUDENTS UNDER SCP/TSP SCHEME BUDGET BRIMS BIDAR FOR THE YEAR 2025-26. 3) **E.M.D:-** 1,03,000.00
Note : For further information about tender please contact Director Brims Bidar office, and if any further changes in tender will be published in KPPP website only.

Sd/- DIRECTOR
Bidar Institute Of Medical Sciences, Bidar.
DIPR/Bidar/358/KSMC&A/2025-26

RAIL WHEEL FACTORY
Yelahanka, Bangalore – 560064
Website: www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in

E - TENDER NOTICE No:RWF/M/OT/MR/2025-26/88 Dated: 12/03/2026

E - TENDER: On behalf of the President of India, the Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer invites electronic tender for the following work online through the website **http://www.ireps.gov.in** (Works).
Sl. No 1. **Tender No.** RWF/M/OT/MR/2025-26/88 Dated: 12/03/2026. **Name of the work:** Repair of MPO car assembly for a qty of 29 numbers of MPO Car assemblies. **Estimated Cost in Rs.** 6,09, 000.00. **Earnest Money Deposit in Rs.** 12,200.00. **Date &Time of Closing of Tenders** 04/04/2026 at 10.30 Hrs. **Completion Period** 9 months

DY. CME/W-I

E - TENDER NOTICE No: RWF/M/OT/SMS/2025-26/89 dtd. 11/03/2026

Sl. No.: 1. **Tender No. :** RWF/M/OT/SMS/2025-26/89. **Name of the work :** Need based outsourcing of the following five works in SMS- A- Removal and cleaning of slag/metal jam from EAF. B- Need based maintenance of furnace bottom & clearing spill over slag in melt shop. C- Need based relining/patching of EAF at Melt shop. D- Preparation of reducing slag mixture in melt shop. E- Need based full lining of EAF-A,B,C for FY 2026-27. **Estimated Cost in Rs.:** 1,22,86,773.64/-. **Earnest Money Deposit in Rs.:** 2,11,400/. **Date & Time of Closing of Tenders:** 02/04/2026 at 10:30 hrs. **Completion Period:** 18 months.
This tender notice and eligibility criteria can be viewed on our website **www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in**.

DY. CME/Melting

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Assistant Director (Animal Husbandry), Annex-3, 4th Floor, N.R. Square, Bengaluru-02
No.: BCCC/2025-26/SE0094/CALL-2 **Date: 12.03.2026**

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Expression of Interest for implementing Mass Dog Vaccination (MDV), Microchipping for Stray Dogs in Bengaluru Central City Corporation limits.

Expression of interest (EOI) Schedule: (1) EOI Reference No.: **BCCC/2025-26/SE0094/CALL-2. (2)** Date of Commencement of download of EOI document from Karnataka public procurement portal website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from **12.03.2026** onwards. **(3)** Tender Inviting Authority: **Chief Veterinary Officer (Animal Husbandry), BCCC. (4)** Tender Accepting Authority: **Commissioner, BCCC. (5)** Last date and time for uploading online queries in Karnataka public procurement portal: **16.03.2026 upto 5:00 p.m. (6)** Date and time of pre-bid meeting: **16.03.2026, 12:30 p.m.** at the following venue: **Office of AD, BCCC, Annex-3, 4th Floor, N.R. Square, Bengaluru-560002. (7)** Last date and time for uploading of EOI in Karnataka public procurement portal: **20.03.2026, 5:00 p.m. (8)** Date and time of opening of EOI in Karnataka public procurement portal: **23.03.2026, 11:00 a.m. (9)** Place of opening of EOI: **Online at Karnataka public procurement portal. (10)** Address for communication: **Assistant Director (Animal Husbandry), Annex-3, 4th Floor, N.R. Square, Bengaluru-02, Ph: 99002 29973, Email: adahbccc@gmail.com**

Only online queries through KPP portal will be accepted. Queries sent through letters, emails or any other mode will not be entertained.

Sd/- Assistant Director (Animal Husbandry), BCCC

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ನಗರ ನೀರು ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮತ್ತು ಒಳಚರಂಡಿ ಮಂಡಳಿ, ವಿಭಾಗ, ರಾಯಚೂರು
ಕಛೇರಿ ವಿಳಾಸ: # 1–11–50/ಎ/ 14 & 15, ಸಿದ್ಧಾರ್ಥ ಕಾಲೋನಿ, ಲಾಯನ್ಸ್ ಕ್ಲಬ್ ಶಾಲೆ ಹಿಂದುಗಡೆ, ರಾಯಚೂರು–584101.
ಇ–ಮೇಲ್: eekwbraichur@gmail.com

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ : ಕಜಮ/ಕಾಪಅ/ರಾವಿ/ತಾಶಾ/ಸ.ಅ/ಸಿರವಾರ/ಒ.ಹೆಚ್.ಟಿ/2025–26/1584 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 10.03.2026

ನಾಲ್ಕನೇ ಕರೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆ (4ನೇ–ಕರೆ)

ಬಿಡ್ ದಾಖಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ವಿವರಿಸಲಾದ ಅರ್ಹತಾ ಅವಶ್ಯಕತೆಗಳನ್ನು ಪೂರೈಸುವ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು/ಫರ್ಮ್ಸ್ ರವರಿಂದ ಇ–ಪ್ರೋಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in) ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ಅಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಸೂಚನೆ:– ಕಾರಣಾಂತರಗಳಿಂದಾಗಿ ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ತಿಳಿಯಪಡಿಸಿದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಿನಾಂಕಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ಇನ್ನಿತರೆ ಯಾವುದೇ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗಳಾದಲ್ಲಿ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು ಇ–ಪ್ರೂಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಗಮನಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

1) ಇ–ಪ್ರೂಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ನಂ.: KUWSDB/2025-26/WS/WORK_INDENT475/CALL-4. ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಿಟ್ಟ ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ. (ಜಿಎಸ್‌ಟಿ ಹೊರತುಪಡಿಸಿ):70,56,337–00. ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.: 1,41,000–00. ಟೆಂಟರ್ ಅವಧಿ: 12 ತಿಂಗಳು.

ವೇಳಾಪಟ್ಟಿ: 1) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳನ್ನು ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ಪ್ರಾರಂಬದ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 10–03–2026 ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ: 11.00 ಘಂಟೆಯ ನಂತರ. 2) ಬಿಡ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 24–03–2026 ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ 17:30 ಘಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ. 3) ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 26–03–2026 ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ 11.00 ಘಂಟೆಯ ನಂತರ. 4. ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಯಶಸ್ವಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ದಾರರಿಗೆ ತಿಳಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು.

ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬೇಕಾದ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿ: ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು. ದೂರವಾಣಿ॥ 08532 200051

ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು.
ಕನನೀಸ ಮತ್ತು ಒಚ ಮಂಡಳಿ, ವಿಭಾಗ, ರಾಯಚೂರು.
DIP/RCR/756/KSMCA/759/2025-26

It is with deep sadness that
we announce the peaceful passing of

Marie–Therese Mascarenhas
1 June 1932 - 1 March 2026

Beloved wife of the late Dr. Gerry Mascarenhas
Devoted mother of Jeanne-Marie, the late Mark,
the late Paula and Borys
Cherished grandmother of Soniya, Manijeh, Meha,
Anne, Paul, David, Rose, Maarek and Anya
and great-grandmother of Ashton

Funeral Mass at 3pm on Sunday, 15 March 2026
at St. Patrick's Church followed by the burial
at St. Patrick's Cemetery

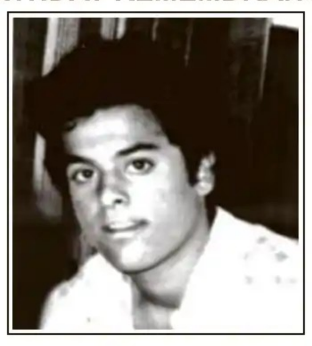
IN LOVING MEMORY

PRASHANT RADHAKRISHNAN
Left us on March 12, 2026

With deep sorrow, we share that we lost a loving son, brother, husband, father and friend.
The funeral will take place today, please join us in our grief and sorrow...
Date: March 13th, Friday, 10.00 am onwards.
Akme Ballet - 1004 Outer Ring Road,
Crematorium Address:
Panathur Crematorium
(12:00 Noon)

DH
DECCAN HERALD
Obituaries & Remembrance Advertisements
Log on to : https://homages.deccanherald.com
or
Scan QR code to access booking form

RANJIT VARMA
BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE



March 13th 1968
Always in our Hearts

HOMAGE

Dr.N.JAYARAMAN
22.02.1911 TO 13.03.1971
OUR FOUNDER
INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH CORPORATION
Manufacturers of
Bril®
Stationery Products

BJP MLA Byrathi Basavaraj gets bail

BENGALURU, DHNS

A special court for cases involving MP/MLAs on Thursday granted conditional bail to KR Puram BJP MLA Byrathi Basavaraj (B A Basavaraja) in the Shivaprakash alias Biklu Shiva murder case.

Basavaraj is arraigned as accused number 5 in the case and was arrested after the high court rejected his petition seeking anticipatory bail in the case.

The special court allowed his bail application and ordered his release on executing a personal bond for Rs 2 lakh with two sureties for the like sum.

The special court judge said the Basavaraj shall not threaten or tamper the prosecution witness, shall not directly or indirectly make an attempt to influence any of the witness, shall appear before the investigating agency as and when called and render full co-operation for the investigation, and that he shall not leave the jurisdiction of the court or travel abroad without obtaining written permission from the court. The court also imposed conditions that Basavaraj shall appear before the investigating officer once a month on any second Sunday between 9 am and 5 pm and shall mark his attendance for a period of three months or till the date of filing the additional complaint, if any, and whichever is earlier.

Byrathi Basavaraj

Shivakumar was murdered on Meanee Avenue Road at Bharathinagar on July 15, 2025. On July 24, the case was transferred to the CID. The order invoking the provisions of the Karnataka Control of Organised Crimes Act (KCOCA) was quashed by the high court on December 19, 2025.

High Court orders magisterial probe into 2025 Hubballi encounter

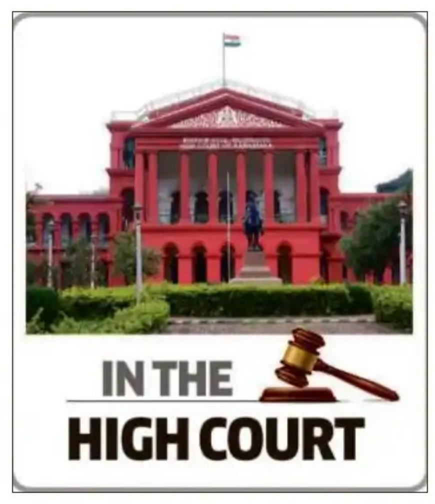
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka High Court has ordered a judicial magisterial inquiry into the encounter of the accused in the rape and murder case of a minor girl in Hubballi in 2025.

A division bench, comprising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice C M Poonacha, said that the judicial magistrate shall bear in mind the guidelines issued by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) for conducting an inquiry into the cases of death in custody or during police action.

The bench passed this order in a PIL filed by the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), Karnataka, seeking directions for the preservation of evidence and an independent investigation into the custodial death of the accused, a migrant worker from Bihar.

The incident had come to light on April 13, 2025, when the police received information about a body of a child, which was abandoned near a shed in the Vijayanagar area, in the jurisdiction of Ashok Nagar police station in Hubli-Dharwad city limits.



Based on the CCTV camera footage, the police identified the accused and arrested him. The petitioners stated that, as per media reports, the accused was interrogated for three hours and that he confessed to the crime.

The police had taken the accused to an abandoned house on the outskirts, where he resided. It is claimed that the accused tried to escape by pelting stones at the police and tried to strangulate a woman police officer. After firing two warning shots, three shots were fired at the accused, and he succumbed to the bullet injuries. The petitioners contended that the FIR registered is not in accordance with the directions issued by the Apex Court in the case of People's Union for Civil Liberties and another vs State of Maharashtra and Others. It was submitted that the state must register an FIR for conducting the investigation into the encounter.

In the present case, the FIR is registered against the accused, and no police official has been named. The government submitted that there is no requirement to specifically name the police officials and that if any further offences are to be added, the same can be done at an appropriate stage.

The bench said that the guidelines issued by the Apex Court will also be applicable to grievous injury cases in police encounters, as far as possible.

"In view of the above, there is no cavil that an enquiry be conducted by a judicial magistrate. We accordingly direct that an enquiry be conducted by the judicial magistrate," the bench said and directed that the inquiry report shall be placed before it on the next date of hearing. The PIL's hearing has been posted to June 8.

El Nino threat for monsoon in second half

El Nino, from Page 1

The World Meteorological Organisation in its February update said the likelihood of El Nino developing increases steadily, rising to around 30% in April–June and 40% in May–July. The ENSO neutral conditions are likely to persist in early summer.

A similar forecast has come from the USA's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that predicts 56% chance of ENSO-neutral condition between June and August, 2026 and nearly 60% chance of El Nino developing by August-September.

"It is too early to make a forecast about a super El Nino but we will have to closely monitor the situation. In 1997, we had a good monsoon even though it was super El Nino year. The models are currently showing a rise of one degree Celsius by the second half of the monsoon, but we have to wait till May for a clear picture," said veteran weather scientist M Rajeevan, former Secretary in the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences.

"But if a super El Nino develops, I will be worried more about the heat waves in 2027. A harsh summer will set in early," Rajeevan added.

State forms panel on AI; to be headed by Kris Gopalakrishnan

AI panel, from Page 1

Complimenting the government for constituting the committee, Gopalakrishnan said, "Artificial Intelligence is a highly disruptive technology, and we are already seeing its potential to significantly accelerate the growth of Karnataka's economy. If we are able to leverage this opportunity effectively, Karnataka can become the first state in the country to develop a comprehensive framework for responsible AI — one that drives better citizen services, creates the jobs of the 21st century, and strengthens our innovation ecosystem."

Members also discussed various issues, including establishing responsible AI principles and policy guidelines for the state, aligned with India's AI governance guidelines and global best practices, risk classification framework for AI systems used in governance, categorising applications based on potential impact and risk levels and recommending a Responsible AI Policy framework for adoption across government departments.

The committee will submit an interim report within 60 days and a final set of recommendations within 90 days, outlining a policy framework, risk classification system and implementation roadmap for responsible AI adoption across government.

The managing director of the Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society (KITS) will serve as the Member Secretary of the committee.

Other members of the committee are: Ajay Vij, country managing director, Accenture India; Lingraju Sawkar, president, Kyndryl India; Amith Singhee, chief technology officer, IBM India/South Asia; Sanjeev Jain, chief operating officer, Wipro; Prof Debabrata Das, director, IIIT Bangalore; Bhaskar Verma, regional director, Nasscom; Vivek Raghavan, co-founder, Sarvam AI; Ashok Kamath, CEO, AI CoE; Dinesh Vijayakumar, legal head, IBM; Rahul Manthan, Technology, Media, and Telecom (TMT) Head, Trilegal.

Income not sole basis to decide OBC creamy layer tag: SC

Creamy layer, from Page 1

The court emphasised that salary income cannot be mechanically aggregated in a manner that defeats the constitutional objective articulated in the Indra Sawhney judgment related to the Mandal Commission, which introduced the concept of creamy layer among the OBCs.

The court's judgment came on March 11 on appeals filed by the Union government against the High Courts of Delhi, Madras and Kerala, which allowed pleas by successful civil services aspirants against their exclusion on OBC categories for being creamy layer in view of the income of their parents employed in PSUs, banks or the private sector. The bench held that treating employees of private entities and PSUs differently from government servants, when deciding whether their children are entitled to reservation, amounts to hostile discrimination.

Dismissing the appeals, the bench said, "The object of excluding the creamy layer is to ensure that socially advanced sections within the OBCs do not appropriate benefits meant for the genuinely backward; it is not to create artificial distinctions between equally placed members of the same social class."

The court stressed that the creamy layer status of OBCs cannot be determined solely on the basis of parental income.

"If similarly situated persons are subjected to differential treatment without a constitutionally sustainable basis, such action would fall foul of Article 14 (equality) of the Constitution," the bench said. The court emphasised that while caste may be an indicator of historical disadvantage, it cannot be treated as the sole determinant of backwardness.

"The exclusion of the creamy layer among the backward classes is not a matter of mere policy preference but a constitutional imperative intended to ensure that the benefits of reservation reach those who are socially and educationally backward in the true sense of the phrase," the bench said. The principle seeks to prevent relatively advanced segments within the backward classes from siphoning off the advantages of affirmative action, so that the objective and purpose of the constitutional scheme of affirmative action, of which reservation is a reflection, are adhered to, the bench added.

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Change of Name

I, MS. Clarissa .S, D/o Minchan Sajesh, aged 24 years, No. 12042, Municipal No. 1/402, situated in Level-4, Block-12-Omaru, in Prestige Wellington Park, Municipal No.1, IAF Main Road, Jalahalli, Bangalore, have changed my name from Clarissa .S and Clarissa Solomon to Clarissa Sajesh vide Affidavit dated 11-03-2026 sworn before Notary Mr. Manohar Jeerige, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
We, **Rajaram H & Manjula G**, residing at No.15, 2nd Main, 3rd Cross, 7th Ballari Road, Ambedkar Slum, Ganganagar, Bengaluru - 560094, have changed my minor daughter's name from **NIHARIKA R** to **NILA. R** vide affidavit dt: 11.03.2026 before notary M.S. Satish, Bengaluru. Henceforth, she shall be called as **NILA. R** only.

I, KISHORE KRISHNA MURTHY B.S. R/a #.23 1st Main Road, Venudevi Residency Shakti nagar, Bangalore- 560016, have changed my name from KISHORE KRISHNA MURTHY B.S to KISHORE KRISHNAN Vide affidavit dated 12/03/2026 before notary Mohammad Hussain .K. Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, INDRANI UMAPATHY age 42 years W/o Ravi Paul R, R/at No. 385, 1st Main, 2nd Cross, R.K. Hegde Nagar, Bengaluru-560077. have changed my name to **INDRANI RAVI PAUL** vide affidavit dated: 11.03.2026 sworn before Notary S. Samuel Solomon, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **JAYANTHI KENNEDY** Residing at No. 306, 3rd floor, Harshitha Arcade, 12th Cross, Somasundara Palya, HRS Layout Sector-II, Bangalore 560102 have changed my name to **JAYANTHI JOHN** vide affidavit dated 12.3.2026 before Notary A. Idinabba, Bangalore.

I, NANDINI M.V. R/a #.23 1st Main Road, Venudevi Residency Shakti Nagar, Bangalore- 560016, have changed my name from NANDINI M.V. to NANDINI KRISHNAN Vide affidavit dated 12/03/2026 before notary Mohammad Hussain .K. Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **RAZIA,** residing at No.104, 4th Floor, 5th Main, 2nd Cross, Vasanthappa Block, Ganganagar, R.T. Nagar Post, Bangalore-560032, have changed my name to **RAZIA A** vide affidavit dated 12-03-2026 before notary L Gopalakrishna, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be called **RAZIA A** only

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I, SMT. Ambika, W/o Sri Basawaraj, aged 40 years, Flat No.104, 1st Floor, Sahasra Grandeur, 2nd Cross, Amruthnagar, Bangalore-560092, have changed my name from Ambika Basavaraja Joldapagi and Ambika Gardshetty and Ambika Baswanthrao Gardshetty to Ambika B Patil vide Affidavit dated 10-03-2026 sworn before Notary Mr. Lakshminarayana, Bangalore.

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1. **Only empty commercial LPG cylinders are seen a goods vehicle due to a scarcity of refills, in Bengaluru on Thursday.** DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V
2. **A popular eatery has pasted a notice on its shutters regarding the temporary halt in its operations at Gandhi Bazaar in Bengaluru.** DH PHOTO/M S MANJUNATH
3. **The stoves stopped burning at the kitchen of a canteen near the district court in Dharwad.** DH PHOTO
4. **A staffer works overtime at a firewood depot at K G Koppal in Mysuru.** DH PHOTO/ANUP RAGH T

Creating artificial scarcity?: Cite 'false deliveries', suspect diverson to commercial use

Gas agencies inaccesible for 48 hrs, allege citizens

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Amid disruptions in the supply of commercial gas cylinders, residents across the city have raised concerns about the growing shortage of domestic gas cylinders.

Some accused gas agencies of diverting domestic stock to commercial enterprises for twice or even thrice the amount. After 12 hours of unsuccessful attempts to call her HP Gas agency on Tuesday, Anubha Gupta from Whitefield logged on to the app and found she had been blocked from placing an order.

"When I tried booking on the app, I got a message that since I already received a cylinder in the last 2 weeks, I will no longer be able to book another one. But that was false as I hadn't booked any. When I checked my history on the app, I was shocked to find that 7 cylinders had been booked in my name recently," she told *DH*.

Akash Das of Bommasandra, said after he was able to book a Bharat Gas cylinder after many unsuccessful attempts on Mar 11, he received a message on Mar 12 saying that the cylinder had been successfully delivered. However, he never received the cylinder.

"I've been trying to contact the agency since morning, but no luck," he added.

Residents in Kanakapura Road, Gunjur, Bannerghatta Road, Banashankari, Rajajinagar and Okalipuram raised complaints about all communication channels to their respective Indane gas agencies being unavailable for over 48 hours, forcing many to opt for black market options, with costs ranging between Rs 1,600 and Rs 3,000.

"When you book HP gas, they send you a message that it is likely to be delivered within a stipulated time. At my home, we usually receive it within 72 hours. But when we booked on Monday, we did not receive the message on expected delivery date. Our local agency has switched off all points of contact," said Rajeev V, a Hebbal resident.

60 Indira canteens shut; labour class in trouble

BENGALURU, DHNS: At least 60 Indira canteens across the city remained shut for dinner on Thursday, owing to shortage of LPG cylinders.

Many more of them are expected to shut down over the next two days. "Several kitchens are running out of cylinders. While a few of them have already exhausted stocks, a few say they can run only for another day," a senior GBA official said.

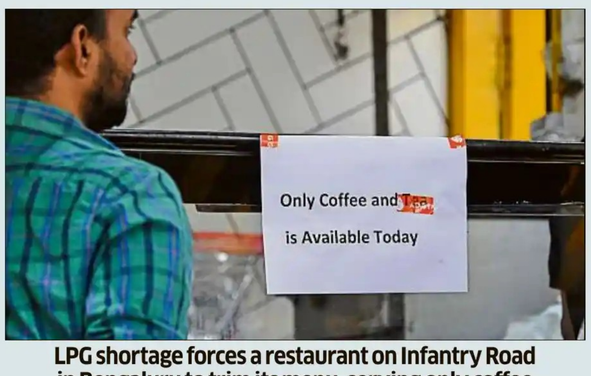
Considering that Indira canteens cater to the needy, GBA has approached the government seeking some relief for these kitchens.

"Tomorrow, we will be meeting food and civil supplies minister to see if we can get some relief," a senior GBA official said. With many of the Darshinis and Indira canteens shut, the vulnerable classes of the society are left in the lurch with no access to affordable food.

More hotels to shut today; Online orders to be hit

Small eateries affected most as suppliers prioritise bulk demands

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS



LPG shortage forces a restaurant on Infantry Road in Bengaluru to trim its menu, serving only coffee and tea to the customers. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

Restaurants in Bengaluru are beginning to shut shop starting today, with darshinis facing the biggest blow amidst the ongoing LPG crisis. Multiple darshinis have halted operations across the city.

It is the small and medium-scale darshinis that have been affected the most, said Madhukar M Shetty, director of Swati Group and vice president of the Karnataka State Hotels Association.

"We are keeping tabs on both big and small darshinis. As on Thursday afternoon, over 30% have temporarily shut operations. The small-scale hotels can't afford to keep stocks. What they earn today is what they invest in the business tomorrow. They usually utilise one commercial cylinder for two days. But now, when they're trying to book, they are being ignored by the gas suppliers as the suppliers are prioritise bulk orders," he added.

Each day the eateries remain closed, they end up losing between Rs 10,000 and Rs 50,000, shared restaurant owners. Due to high demand in areas like Majestic, restaurants in the neighbourhood are facing more trouble getting their hands on commercial cylinders.

Kadamba Hotel with 17 branches across the city shut shop at its Majestic branch on March 11 for the same reason.

As a last resort, some eateries like Bangalore Thindies are only serving tea and coffee.

"Today, we helped one hotel reopen in Majestic. We are urging restaurants not to shut shop, but instead operate on limited menus. We plan to help seven to eight restaurants. We are hopeful that we receive a consignment of gas cylinders on Friday," PC Rao, president of Bruhat Bangalore Hotels Association, told *DH*.

Additionally, a few other restaurants continue to pay a hefty price.

Hunan, a Pan-Asian, with two dine-in restaurants and a cloud kitchen, is likely to run out of its available LPG cylinders on Thursday, shared Pema Takchung, director of the chain. Chicken Country in Gandhi Nagar also ran out of LPG on Wednesday.

Restaurants are looking for innovative solutions to beat the crisis. While Hallimane is investing in electric dosa tawas, Big Fat Roll is investing in electric fryers. Additionally, the roll company is also reaching out to its customers through social media for help in accessing commercial gas cylinders.

The company shared a social media post stating, "Help us cook, we'll feed you. Bring a commercial gas cylinder to your nearest outlet and get 25 big fat rolls in return".

Priority for dine-in

As of March 12, at least 100 restaurants in the city have completely run out of LPG cylinders, shared Ananth Narayan, Bengaluru Chapter Head, National Restaurant Association of India.

"Those who are surviving on limited LPG are prioritising dine-in, rather than online orders. Many restaurants stopped accepting online orders on Thursday," he said. As per an industry insider, restaurants serving Indian and Chinese food were the first to stop taking online orders on platforms like Swiggy and Zomato, resulting in a dip in daily orders. Swiggy and Zomato did not respond to DH's queries.

Hospital kitchens prioritise food for patients, limit menus

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Hospital kitchens are prioritising food for patients and limiting menus at their canteens.

Many of the hospital canteens are looking for alternative means such as switching from traditional gas-based kitchens to electric kitchens. Some hospitals are dependent on piped natural gas.

Srikant Subudhi, COO of Aster Whitefield Hospital, told *DH*, "Due to the LPG shortage, the hospital is focusing on serving patients first, ensuring they get meals while minimizing food services for staff and visitors. This helps conserve LPG and manage the limited supply effectively".

"To combat the situation, we have reduced our food menu variety to conserve LPG consumption. We are in talks with suppliers to instal new electric cooking equipment," he said. Many private hospitals said they are noticing the problem for the last three days.

"We are not able to procure adequate gas supply, so we are looking at reducing the menu and limiting only to patients," the spokesperson of a private hospital said.

Those using electric appliances, piped gas not affected

However, hospitals like MS Ramaiah Hospital said they are not anticipating any disruption due to the use of piped gas and electric appliances.

Government hospitals

Canteens at government hospitals are looking at cutting down menus. The owner of the canteen at a government hospital told *DH*, "Our stock is ending soon. We might be able to function for another day. We are cutting down menus and serving only rice items to save on gas".

ISKCON recently collaborated with government hospitals to provide dietary food to inpatients.

Naveena Neerada Dasa, executive director-strategy and international relations, Akshaya Patra Foundation, World Food Movement, ISKCON, Bengaluru said, "For Akshaya Patra, we are using briquettes. For supplying food to patients, we are dependent on piped gas and electronic equipment. No matter what, we will continue supplying food to patients as it as an essential service".

Briquettes are compacted blocks of coal dust, biomass (sawdust, agricultural waste) or charcoal used as renewable and efficient fuel source for heating, cooking and industrial boilers.

Demand for work from home rises as LPG crisis deepens

BENGALURU, DHNS: With canteens of many companies shut, and the transportation fleet affected owing to shortage in the supply of LPG, many IT companies might shift to work from home, if the situation continues, sources said.

However, as of now, discussions are still in the initial stages. "A few companies are thinking about such options, but discussions are still in the initial stages. If the situation continues over the next few weeks, such decisions might become more relevant," a representative from the Outer Ring Road Companies Association (ORRCA) said.

Many employees have also demanded complete work from home, stating unavailability of autos and cabs.

"Over the last two days, it has become very difficult to get an auto. The waiting time is too long and rides have also become expensive, making commuting difficult," said Sahana B, a techie. Industry insiders also said that a decision might be taken only based on government recommendations.

"The companies now want to wait and see how the situation will pan out. Based on government intervention, they might take a call," one of the sources said.

Amid high firewood demand, foresters told to up vigil on illegal tree felling

BENGALURU, DHNS:: With the LPG crisis deepening, the demand for wood has gone up since many hotels, PGs and others are turning to traditional firewood cooking.

Noting that this could lead to increase in tree felling, the forest department has directed its officials to exercise extreme caution and prevent illegal tree felling.

In an order passed on Thursday, Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said illegal tree felling might increase not just in forest area, but also in government properties and other green patches.

"It is important to stay vigilant," the order said. So, the forest department officials have been asked to intensify patrolling and stay alert.

Shortage rumours fuel rush at B'luru petrol bunks

PUSHKAR V
BENGALURU, DHNS

Panic gripped the city's fuel stations on Thursday as rumours of a shortage triggered long queues and bulk filling.

At several petrol bunks, attendants reported a big shift in consumer behaviour, with nearly 80% of motorists opting to fill their tanks full rather than their usual Rs 500 or Rs 1,000 refills.

The auto and taxi drivers are feeling the strain due to rising CNG and LPG prices, along with the fears of irregular supply amid the ongoing Iran war that has pushed up their daily operating costs.

Some drivers are into panic-buying of fuel due to fears of further price hikes, while others are opting to fill only what they need, hoping the situation will stabilise soon.

Long queues have become a common sight outside several LPG and CNG filling stations in the city. Many drivers say uncertainty over supply and prices led to panic buying, adding to waiting time and operational delays. A major CNG station in Malleswaram witnessed a chaotic scene as autos and cars stretched down the road.

"I've been driving for three kilometres looking for gas. Every station in my area is either shuttered or has a 'No Stock' board," Manjunath, a CNG car driver, said.

The fuel prices have seen a sharp rise in the past few weeks as LPG prices have jumped since earlier this month from around Rs 58 to nearly Rs 78 per kg now at some outlets, while CNG currently costs about Rs 90.1 per kg.

Prices also vary across companies, with some Indian Oil outlets selling LPG at around Rs 70 per kg, while other suppliers charge close to Rs 90.

Long queues have become a common sight outside several LPG and CNG filling stations in Bengaluru. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

Speaking to *DH*, auto driver Raghu Kumar from Vijayanagar said the continuous price rise is affecting their earnings

"The prices are increasing every day without any cap or regulation. It has led to a dent in the business," he said.

The drivers said they require 8–10 kg of fuel a day to run their vehicles. "With prices rising constantly, it is difficult to maintain the home finances," Raghu said. According to drivers' unions, CNG prices have increased by Rs 27 in a month.

C Sampath, general secretary of the Adarsha Auto Drivers Union, said the hike has placed many drivers in a difficult position.

"The spike of Rs 27 has led to CNG costing Rs 90.1 per kg while the minimum auto fare remains Rs 36 for the first two km and Rs 18 per km after that," he said.

For some, the situation has reinforced the shift to electric vehicles. Kavitha, a first-generation auto driver, said choosing an electric auto now feels like the right decision.

"I had contemplated on which one to buy. Considering the consistent CNG price increase and supply disruptions, today I am glad to have selected an electric auto," she said.

FUNCTIONS ON PAUSE MODE

Caterers, event managers make do with thinning gas stocks as crisis looms

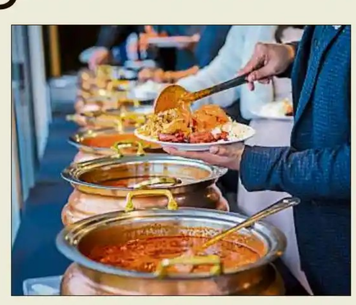
ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

With the peak wedding season round the corner, the city's catering and event management sectors are sounding the alarm over the gas supply crisis. As distributors warn of a complete halt in supply for the next five days, caterers fear a repeat of the pandemic-era lockdowns if the situation is not resolved before March 25.

Staff at Sannidhi Caterers told *DH* that while they currently rely on backup cylinder stocks, the reserves are thinning rapidly.

"Distributors are saying there will be no supply for another five days. The real test begins after Ugadi when the wedding season kicks in. If this isn't sorted by March 25, it will have a major impact. We might be looking at a 'Covid 2.0' scenario for our industry," a staff member said.

At GPV Catering Services, management has shifted to survival mode, prioritising small gatherings like birthdays and naming ceremonies over large-scale orders.



"We are cutting down on 'gas-guzzling' items. Oily dishes, North Indian gravies and Chinese cuisine which require high-flame cooking are being removed from the menu," said the manager at GPV.

While customers have been understanding so far, caterers admit they are merely pushing through by using gas judiciously.

Tony Stephen, president of the Karnataka Event Management Association, noted that while weddings are holding steady for now, the corporate sector is reeling from a domino effect of cancellations.

"Panic is there for sure. Events planned since October or November, town halls or CEO visits are being called off," Stephen told *DH*.

He pointed to a growing number of empty hotel rooms as international travel, particularly from Central Asia, declines due to rising costs and geopolitical tensions.

The industry's medium and small-scale players are expected to be the hardest hit.

"If the situation doesn't clear by next week, we will see the effect of losses across the board," Stephen warned, adding that the sector urgently needs government assurance and logistical support to navigate the coming weeks.

193 Oppn MPs sign notice seeking CEC's removal

NEW DELHI, DHNS: With the I.N.D.I.A bloc all set to submit a notice seeking removal of Chief Election Commission Gyanesh Kumar on Friday, at least 193 MPs -- 130 of Lok Sabha and 63 of Rajya Sabha -- have signed the separate notices charging him on seven points that include "partisan and discriminatory conduct in office".

Gyanesh Kumar

Opposition sources said the mood of the MPs in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha against the CEC prompted the leadership to collect their signatures and submit the notices citing Article 324(5) in both the Houses of Parliament.

A senior leader said this is the first time that such a notice will be submitted against the CEC. There were attempts in 1991 to submit such a notice against TN Seshan but it did not progress while in 2006, NDA submitted a memorandum against Naveen Chawla.

The notice is learnt to have listed seven charges against Kumar, including "partisan and discriminatory conduct in office", "deliberate obstruction of investigation of electoral fraud" and "mass disenfranchisement through SIR".

While AAP has signed the notice, the Opposition has not reached out to parties like BJD, BRS and YSR Congress.

Vellappally Natesan, son disqualified from SNDP board

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

The Board of Directors of the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP), including general secretary Vellappally Natesan and his son Thushar, who is the SNDP vice-president and NDA convenor in Kerala, have been disqualified by the Kerala High Court for non-compliance with statutory requirements of the Companies Act.

A bench passed the order in a long-pending case filed by a forum titled the SNDP Yogam Samrakshana Samathi. The petitioners include noted writer and social activist M K Sanu, who died last year.

While Natesan's recent selection for the Padma Bhushan award by the central government had triggered a row as he was involved in many criminal cases, his son, who is the president of Bharath Dharma Jana Seana, was reportedly planning to contest the upcoming Assembly elections in Kerala as an NDA candidate.

The SNDP is a forum of the Hindu-Ezhava community — the largest Hindu community in Kerala. It is registered under the Companies Act, but failed to file financial statements for more than three years in a row. The court directed the government to appoint temporary directors.

Natesan and others are planning to file an appeal.

While Natesan has been backing the CPM these days, his son continues to be a key player in the NDA as its state convenor.

The HC directive against Natesan and his son could have repercussions on the forthcoming Assembly polls.

Ban on LGBTQ persons donating blood retained after review: Govt to SC

Court refuses to interfere with Centre's decision, asks why poor people risk infection

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Central government on Thursday told the Supreme Court that it had decided to retain the ban on blood donations by the LGBTQ community after due deliberations and review.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Central government, submitted before a bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant that the experts reiterated that the ban was essential in the larger public interest.

"The experts reconsidered, and there was a reconsidered opinion that if this ban was diluted, it would be injurious to the recipients," she said.

The court was hearing a bunch of petitions by members of the LGBTQ+ community, led by author and former journalist Sharif D Rangnekar, as well as social activists Thangjam Santa Singh and Harish Iyer.

The court last year asked the Union government to reconsider the blood donation rules for the LGBTQ community.

The bench, also comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi, observed that even 1% chance of infection should not be there.

While expressing disinclination to interfere with the Central government's decision, the bench asked the petitioners to say why the court should issue a direction.

Free blood facilities

"After all, there are millions and millions of poor people who take free blood facilities. They cannot afford private hospitals. It is the poor-strata people who are sustaining on this blood... Even if there is a 1% chance of any infection, why should they be affected?" the bench asked senior advocate Jayna Kothari, appearing for the petitioners.

The counsel said that the committee's reasoning had not been placed on record. She contended that the decision was targeting a person merely on the grounds of their sexuality and gender identity.

The petitioners challenged the "Guidelines on Blood Donor Selection and Blood Donor Referral, 2017" issued by the National Blood Transfusion Council (NBTC) and the National Aids Control Organisation (NACO) under the aegis of the Central Health Ministry.

The court also termed the petitions as "luxury litigation".

As global firms manage data, right to privacy a matter of concern: Top court

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Thursday decided to examine a plea challenging the provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, saying that with data now managed by massive global companies, safeguarding data sovereignty and the right to privacy had become an urgent global concern that demands clear legal boundaries.

A bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi was hearing a plea filed by Geeta Seshu and others inter alia seeking direction or declaration quashing and setting aside Sections 7, 17(2)(a), 19(3) 24, 36, 44(2)(a), and 44(3) of the DPDP Act, 2023, for being unconstitutional, void and inoperative, and violative of Articles 14, 19(1)(a), 19(1)(g), 21 and 21A of the Constitution.

The court issued notice to the central government and others, seeking their response to the plea upon hearing senior advocate Indira Jaisingh for the petitioners.

During the hearing, the court emphasised that because data was now being handled by "massive global companies", protecting data sovereignty and the "right to privacy" has become an urgent global issue that needs clear legal boundaries.

The bench observed that data was becoming the real wealth. However, ultimately, the interesting question that would have to be determined was what was public data and what was personal data, said the court.

It also said another point could be whether data with respect to a person, so long as they held a public office, could be termed personal data or private data.

It was contended that there were provisions in the DPDP Act that enabled the accessing of data from other countries as well. The counsel contended that data sovereignty issues also arose in the matter.

Rahul targets govt over LPG crisis; Lok Sabha speech halted

LoP's speech cut short after he links minister Puri to Epstein

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Opposition on Thursday showed no signs of relenting on confrontation with the Modi government in Lok Sabha as Rahul Gandhi raised questions over the LPG crisis following the situation in West Asia, claiming that he has figured out the "puzzle of compromise", but his speech was cut short after he linked Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri to the Epstein Files.

Rahul did not continue his speech as Speaker Om Birla maintained that he had deviated from the content of the 'notice' he had submitted and that he cannot be allowed to make allegations against an MP without giving prior notice, even as the Leader of the Opposition said he was talking about energy and economic security of the country.

The fresh confrontation comes a day after an Opposition-sponsored notice to remove Birla as Speaker was defeated and on a day he told the House that the Leader of Opposition has "no special privilege" so that he can say anything.

Just before Puri made a statement in the House in the late afternoon, Rahul was called to speak on the issue as he had submitted a notice seeking a discussion on the shortage of LPG supply, which he said has created "widespread panic" in the country, with restaurants closing and street vendors getting affected.

Warning that the war between US-Israel and Iran would have "far-reaching consequences", he said the closure of the Strait of Hormuz would have "tremendous repercussions" as a large portion of oil for the country comes from this region. "The pain has just started. Restaurants are closing. There is widespread panic about LPG. Street vendors are affected," he said.

Insisting that the foundation of every nation is based on energy security, he questioned how one can allow the US to decide on who India will buy oil and gas from or whether New Delhi can buy oil from Russia or not. He said relationships with oil suppliers will be decided by India, but alleged that it has been "bartered".

"It is a puzzling fact that why a nation the size of India would allow any other nation to give us permission to buy Russian oil, to decide who our relations are with. This has been a puzzle, and I have figured it out. The puzzle is about compromise," he said and referred to Puri's own statement about being friends with Jeffrey Epstein.

LoP in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Opposition MPs Hibi Eden, Prashant Padole, Manickam Tagore and others stage a protest over 'LPG shortage' during the second part of Budget session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Thursday. PTI

BJP MP files motion against Rahul Gandhi for eating at Parliament entrance

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The rules of parliamentary procedure have become the latest flashpoint between the Opposition and members of the treasury benches, with the BJP's vociferous leader Nishkant Dubey filing a notice against Lok Sabha Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi for sitting on the steps of Parliament's main entrance.

Dubey had filed another motion against Gandhi in the earlier part of the Budget Session, a substantive motion, and the Speaker has yet to take any action on the motion.

Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said the Speaker had already given a ruling on the entrances of Parliament.

"While it is the Speaker's prerogative to take any action on the complaint filed, the Speaker had earlier already given a ruling that there should be no feasting, eating, or picnicking in any of the six entrances of Parliament," he said.

"No kind of special gathering can be organised within these gates. There is a picture where Rahul Gandhi is eating in the entrance alongside his colleagues. He is defying the observation and the ruling," said Rijiju.

Earlier in the day, some women MPs from the TMC had entered the House with utensils as a mark of protest. Rijiju said the Speaker had taken note of that as well.

"What can be carried inside the House and what not is specified in the Rules of Procedure. Action, if any, will be taken by the Speaker if he deems fit," said the minister.

After Gandhi's speech was halted when he mentioned Epstein Files, several Opposition members trooped to the well of the House, shouting slogans and throwing bits of paper.

LS to function according to its rules: Speaker

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

A day after the Lok Sabha rejected a motion seeking his removal, Speaker Om Birla on Thursday said the House would function strictly according to its rules and procedures, asserting that no member — including the prime minister — was above them.

Addressing the House after returning to the Chair, Birla said the functioning of Parliament was governed by rules framed by itself, and that these applied equally to all members.

"I will continue to discharge my duty with all sincerity and impartiality," he added.

Rejects allegations

Rejecting allegations that some members were being prevented from speaking, the Speaker said everyone was allowed to participate in debates, but only in accordance with parliamentary procedures.

"I have always tried to ensure that every member expresses their views within the framework of rules and procedures," he said.

Birla also stressed that no member enjoyed any special privilege to bypass the House's rules.

"No member has the right to speak beyond the rules. Whether it is the Prime Minister, ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, or any other member, everyone has to follow the rules," he said.

The Speaker said the House itself had framed the procedures governing parliamentary business, and all members must respect them.

Birla also said the Speaker's responsibility was to uphold the rules impartially and ensure that the rights of both the treasury benches and the Opposition are protected.

Thanking members for expressing confidence in him after the motion against him was defeated, he said the Speaker's chair represented the dignity of the institution rather than any individual.

"The Chair does not belong to any one individual; it is a symbol of the prestige of the House," he said.

He also expressed gratitude to members who participated in the debate on the motion, saying he had listened carefully to both criticism and support during the discussion.

The Opposition parties had brought the motion alleging partisan conduct by the Speaker in running the House — a charge the government and its allies strongly rejected during the discussion.

OM BIRLA
Lok Sabha Speaker

"The House has been running with rules and regulations and will continue to function in future, irrespective of whether it is acceptable to any member or not. I will continue to discharge my duty with all sincerity and impartiality

Oppn seeks all-party meet on women's quota

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Opposition parties are not enthusiastic about discussing the contours of changes in the law for a 33% women's quota individually with the Narendra Modi government, and have conveyed their demand for an all-party meeting to deliberate on the issue, sources said.

They interpreted the government's outreach, which they described as "selective" in approach, as a sign of its realisation that it does not have a two-thirds majority in either the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha to carry out a constitutional amendment, they added.

The government had recently reached out to major parties like the Congress and Samajwadi Party with a proposal to amend the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023, or the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam', which was passed in a special session in September 2023, to fasten the implementation of 33% quota for women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies.

Samajwadi Party MPs Dimple Yadav and Priya Saroj during the second part of Budget session. PTI

CHANGE IN LAW

- Oppostion resists one-on-one talks with govt on 33% women's quota
- Congress, SP seek OBC sub-quota within 33% quota
- Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi push for consensus through all-party meet

The proposal is to delink the delimitation exercise after the next census from the implementation of the women's quota, sources said. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju is learnt to have approached the Congress and SP leadership for a meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah as part of the consultation process.

In principle, both parties are not opposed to the women's quota, though they have demanded a quota-within-quota for OBCs within the 33% reservation, similar to the provisions for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Sources said the government's move was viewed with suspicion by the Opposition, which felt it was an attempt to secure the support of major parties and then force others into consensus. Congress sources added that party chief Mallikarjun Kharge held consultations with Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and demanded that an all-party meeting be convened to discuss the issue.

A senior Opposition leader said the government's outreach to major parties this time stands in complete contrast to 2023, when it brought the bill to Parliament. There was no official word then on the business of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, and at the time, it was confident of securing a two-thirds majority.

President says no time for TMC delegation; party writes again

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Trinamool Congress' request for a delegation to meet President Droupadi Murmu this week to clear her "misgivings" about West Bengal and provide details about the state government's work was not entertained by the Rashtrapati Bhavan "due to paucity of time", prompting the party to try for a meeting next week, said sources.

The party's Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien had written to the President on March 9 seeking an appointment to "proudly share" the state government's many initiatives following a direction from Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who also heads the party, said the sources.

The TMC's move came days after the President criticised the state government for the "lapses" in organising her events in Darjeeling last week, with Murmu finding fault with the absence of Mamata or any senior minister to receive her during her visit, as per protocol, besides the troubles faced by the Scheduled Tribes.

'Paucity of time'

However, sources said the Rashtrapati Bhavan informed O'Brien that the request for a meeting of a 12-15-member delegation, which would include state ministers and MPs, "could not be acceded to due to paucity of time".

Derek O'Brien

Following this, O'Brien has written again seeking her to request a reconsideration and grant them time between March 16 and 20, while acknowledging the "constraints" on the President's schedule this week.

The sources said the Trinamool Congress' earlier letter had sought the appointment to share the Mamata-led government's initiatives for an inclusive development, claiming that the regime had been implementing path-breaking welfare and development programmes for the upliftment of tribal communities.

These included education, social security, livelihood support, and infrastructure development programmes to improve the quality of life of SC, ST, and OBC communities across the state, said sources quoting the letter.

A senior TMC leader claimed that the highest Constitutional office of the President had been "misinformed" by the ruling BJP.

Separately, the TMC also wrote to Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan, seeking to expunge the statements by BJP MP Baburam Nishad during Zero Hour on Wednesday, while also raising the issue of "concern over alleged protocol violation" during the President's Bengal visit.

Two senior HPCL officials shot dead in UP

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

Two senior officials of the Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) were shot dead inside the Company's compressed bio-gas plant in UP's Badaun district on Thursday.

The deceased were identified as Sudheer Gupta, the plant manager, and Harshit Mishra, deputy manager.

According to the police sources, the alleged attacker, who was accompanied by some others, barged into the plant around noon and fired several shots at Gupta and Mishra. They were rushed to the Community Health Centre at Dataganj, where the doctors declared them dead on arrival.

The firing triggered chaos inside the plant, and the employees ran for their safety when they heard the sound. Taking advantage of the chaos, the attacker and others managed to make good his escape from the spot, sources said.

Some reports said that the attacker, identified as Ajay Pratap Singh, was a former employee who was a pay loader operator at the plant and had been sacked a few months back. The two had also reportedly sought security for themselves.

Sources said that earlier attempts were also made to kill the duo.

HEAVY-LIFT MISSION

Isro conducts sea-level test of cryogenic engine

BENGALURU, PTI

Isro on Thursday said it has successfully conducted a sea-level hot test of its cryogenic engine (CE20) at 22 tonne thrust using the nozzle protection system and multi-element igniter at its Propulsion Complex at Mahendragiri in Tamil Nadu.

Earlier, the sea-level tests utilising the nozzle protection system were being carried out at a 19-tonne thrust level. The CE20 cryogenic engine powers the upper cryogenic stage of the Launch Vehicle Mark-3(LVM3).

"In order to enhance the payload capability of the LVM3 vehicle, future missions of LVM3 are planned to be operated with an uprated C32 stage with 22 tonne thrust for the CE20 engine. In view of this, the flight acceptance test of the CE20 engine also needs to be conducted at 22 tonne thrust level," Isro said in a post on its website.

"Therefore, the present test (on March 10) qualified the sea-level testing of the engine with a test duration of 165 seconds at 22t thrust level using the Nozzle Protection System (NPS). The performance of the engine as well as the test facility was as expected during the entire test duration," it said.

Noting that testing the CE20 engine at sea-level possess considerable challenges primarily due to the high area ratio nozzle, which has an exit pressure of ₹50 mbar (millibar), the space agency said, "Main concern during testing at sea-level include flow separation inside the nozzle, which leads to severe vibrations and thermal problems at the flow separation plane leading to possible mechanical damage of the nozzle."

"The Cryogenic engine utilized for this test has undergone a record maximum number of hot tests (20 Nos) successfully....." it added.

ENERGY CRISIS: No fuel shortage, says Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri as govt activates alternate channels

LPG refill gap raised from 25 to 45 days in rural areas

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

A rural household can now book an LPG cylinder only after a gap of 45 days, up from the earlier 25 days, as the ongoing West Asia conflict disrupts supply. Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, however, claimed in Parliament on Thursday that India's crude oil and gas supplies remain fully protected.

"A 25-day minimum booking gap has been introduced as a demand management measure in urban areas, and 45 days in rural and durgam kshetra (remote areas)," Puri said.

Hardeep Singh Puri

People queue up with their empty cylinders outside a LPG depot to receive refilled ones, amid supply shortage in the country, in Ahmedabad , Gujarat, on Thursday. PTI

Until recently, the minimum waiting period for booking a domestic LPG cylinder refill was 21 days. A few days ago, it was raised to 25 days. The Petroleum Ministry has said the waiting period was extended to prevent hoarding and black marketing.

Addressing a media briefing, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said that there has been a multi-fold jump in the booking of LPG cylinders due to panic.

SUPPLY DISRUPTION

- Panic buying triggers jump in LPG bookings
- Urban refill gap set at 25 days
- Govt cites demand management, hoarding prevention for extended wait period
- Allows use of kerosene for homes, coal for hospitality sector

Imports via Hormuz

"We import almost 60% of our LPG, and nearly 90% of it comes through the Strait of Hormuz. It's a difficult situation, but the government is making every effort to ensure supply to domestic consumers," Sharma said.

"We deliver close to 50 lakh cylinders daily. On the distribution side, no dry-outs have been reported. But there has been a manifold increase in bookings because of panic," she added.

On LPG supplies to businesses such as hotels and restaurants, Sharma said the oil marketing companies would now release some commercial cylinders in coordination with state governments.

"State governments have been requested to identify the list of beneficiaries so that the delivery can be made on a priority basis," she added.

Kerosene, coal

Meanwhile, the central government has also decided to temporarily allow the use of kerosene for households and coal for hotels and restaurants.

The government has allocated 48,000 kilolitres of additional kerosene to states on top of the regular quota of 1 lakh for use as cooking fuel.

"Alternate fuel options are being activated to ease pressure on LPG and gas channels. Kerosene is being made available through retail outlets and PDS channels, and fuel oil is being made available for industrial and commercial consumers," the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas said.

The ministry has requested environmental bodies to permit the use of biomass, RDF pellets, and coal as alternate fuels in the hospitality and restaurant sector for one month.

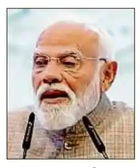
WAR SHOCKS

However, Puri sought to allay concerns over oil and gas shortages in the country.

"There is no shortage of petrol, diesel, kerosene, ATF or fuel oil. The availability of petrol, diesel, aviation turbine fuel, kerosene, and fuel oil is fully assured," he said in the Lok Sabha.

"Retail outlets across the country are stocked and supply chains for these products are functioning normally. Additional allocation of PDS kerosene has been issued to all states," he added.

Will act against those creating panic: PM warns black marketers


Narendra Modi

NEW DELHI, PTI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday hit out at "those trying to create panic on the LPG situation in India", and said they are not only exposing themselves before the people but also hurting the country.

Speaking during an event here, Modi also said that no country is untouched by the present crisis in West Asia and the government is doing everything possible to safeguard India's energy security.

He also said that some people are trying to black-market certain products by taking advantage of the present situation, and warned that action will be taken against such unscrupulous elements.

"Some people are trying to create panic on LPG. Without making a political point, I will say they are not only exposing themselves before people but hurting the country," Modi said.

Despite many global crises, world leaders and experts look to India with great hope, which raises India's responsibilities too, Modi said.

"The entire world knows today that if you want to be part of the future, you must connect with and be in India," he said.

Another Indian sailor killed; toll climbs to three

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The number of Indian mariners killed in the West Asia conflict has gone up to three with the death of a crew member during an attack on an oil tanker off Iraq. The latest casualty came amid uncertainty over New Delhi securing any guarantee from Tehran for the safety of Indian merchant ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

Uncertainty over safety

Meanwhile, Tehran has denied reports of acceding to New Delhi's request to ensure safety of merchant vessels heading towards India or owned by entities in India when they would sail through the Strait of Hormuz.

Safesea Vishnu, a US-owned tanker sailing under the Marshall Islands flag, came under attack in the Persian Gulf off Basra late night Wednesday, resulting in the death of one of 16 Indian mariners onboard. The remaining 15 crew members have since been evacuated to safety, according to the Embassy of India in Baghdad.

New Delhi's diplomatic mission in Baghdad is in regular contact with the authorities in Iraq and extending all possible assistance to the rescued Indians, stated the MEA.

Two more Indian mariners were killed in an attack on another oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman earlier this month.

Wednesday's incident came even as India joined 134 other nations in co-sponsoring a UN Security Council resolution denouncing Iran's attacks on the GCC countries and Jordan.

The resolution also denounced Tehran's threats and actions to close or interfere with international shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, and threats to maritime security in the Bab Al Mandab, another critical narrow strait, linking the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden.

9k Indians in Iran: Govt

There are nearly 9,000 Indian nationals including students, business persons, factory workers, pilgrims, seafarers, and fishermen in Iran at present, the government informed Parliament on Thursday, reports PTI.

In a written response to a query in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita also said the Indian Embassy has advised Indian nationals in Iran to exercise utmost caution, maintain situational awareness, monitor local media for any developments and stay in contact with the embassy.

LPG suppliers approach HC

The Bombay High Court on Thursday issued notices to the Union petroleum and natural gas ministry as well as a private firm in connection with a petition filed by six LPG distributors seeking increased supply of domestic cooking gas cylinders amid the energy crisis due to the Iran war.

The petitioners claimed Nagpur-headquartered Confidence Petroleum India Ltd had failed to augment the supply of household LPG cylinders despite the Centre's directive prioritising domestic distribution.

Gig economy on edge amid disruption fears

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

Gig workers and app-based transport workers are raising serious concerns over the emerging shortage of LPG and CNG supplies.

Thousands of drivers operating LPG and CNG-powered vehicles through platforms such as Ola, Uber, and Rapido depend on uninterrupted access to affordable fuel. Any supply disruption could lead to long queues at fuel stations, fewer trips, and immediate income loss for drivers already struggling with rising operational costs.

Food delivery workers associated with platforms like Swiggy and Zomato may also face problems if eateries and cloud kitchens experience LPG supply disruptions. Reduced food-making capacity could directly affect order volumes, and thus delivery workers' earnings.

Reduced cooking capacity is likely to affect delivery workers. REUTERS FILE

"The gig and platform economy ecosystem is highly sensitive to fuel availability. Even a short-term shortage can affect multiple sectors, including ride-hailing services, food delivery platforms, courier services, and small restaurants that rely on LPG," Telangana Gig and Platform Workers' Union (TGPWU) founder president Shaik Salauddin told *DH*.

He urged the Central and state governments to monitor the situation and take immediate steps to ensure an uninterrupted supply of LPG and CNG.

Panic buying chokes roads, petrol pumps in TN

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

People across Tamil Nadu resorted to panic buying on Thursday, queuing up at fuel stations to stock petrol and diesel in 20-litre water cans and rushing to stores to purchase induction stoves, anticipating acute shortages of fuel and LPG cylinders due to the Iran war.

With commercial LPG cylinders not easily available, more than 200 small and medium-sized eateries downed the shutters, while many restaurants trimmed menus to keep operations going. Several petrol pumps ran dry as panicked crowds descended with water cans and barrels to stock up on fuel. Long queues formed outside stations, with two-wheelers and cars lined up to fill their tanks.

Though petrol stations are prohibited from filling bottles and cans with fuel, attendants came under pressure from customers, petrol bunk owners said. In some places, people refused to relent even after police assured them there was no shortage of fuel.

Motorists queue up to refuel their vehicles at a petrol bunk in Chennai on Thursday. PTI

There were traffic jams as vehicles clogged stretches of road outside four petrol stations on Arcot Road and Kodambakkam High Road.

Similar snarls were reported across the city and in several parts of the state. On the Thanjavur-Tiruvarur highway, vehicles were stuck for over 40 minutes due to heavy crowding outside petrol stations. Long queues began forming as early as 4 am in localities such as Velachery and Tambaram.

As e-commerce platforms declared induction stoves out of stock, people began calling electronics appliance stores such as Sathya and Vivek's to check availability. Sathya said induction stoves have been flying off the shelves in recent days.

KP Murali of the Tamil Nadu Petroleum Dealers Association said there were no restrictions on the supply of petrol and diesel to 7,000 dealers in the state from the three oil companies — IOC, HPC and BPC — and urged people not to queue up at petrol stations out of panic.

SHORTAGE FEAR

- People queue at petrol pumps with cans and rush for induction stoves
- Petroleum Dealers Association assures no supply curbs, urges public not to hoard
- Hoteliers warn closures could rise if LPG cylinders remain unavailable
- CM appeals for calm, citing Centre's assurance of sufficient fuel stocks

The Tamil Nadu Hotels Association said 220 small- and medium-sized restaurants in Chennai closed on Thursday due to a shortage of commercial LPG cylinders. The association warned that the number could rise on Friday if cylinders were not made available to restaurants.

Global tensions take flavour out of Ramzan in Mumbai

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

During the month of Ramzan, Mumbai's Mohammed Ali Road, Nagpada Junction, Bhendi Bazaar, Minara Masjid, Bohri Mohalla and Dongri transform into a paradise for food lovers.

For nearly a century, the aroma of kebabs, nalli nihari and biryani has drawn Mumbaikars into these bustling lanes. There is always more here than one can imagine.

However, this year feels different. The West Asia conflict has triggered an LPG crisis, casting a shadow over the festive feasts. According to reports, menus across several iconic stalls have been trimmed or altered.

"The LPG shortage has hit us. We have been providing free food to needy people twice a day during Sehri and Iftar. However, we have stopped serving fried items. We are giving only chicken dishes and vegetables," said Firoz Ahmed Ansari, managing director of Love All-Serve All, an NGO based in Nagpada.

"We are facing difficult times. It is hard to believe, but we are cooking with coal, which costs Rs 35 to Rs 45 per kg. The 19-kg commercial LPG cylinders are not available," said Saeed Khan, owner of KGN Catering Service.

A prominent hotelier from the Bhendi Bazaar-Nagpada area added, "By law, we cannot use wood, so many hoteliers have shifted to coal. However, coal prices are also rising."

Aejaz Ahmed Ansari, a veteran Urdu journalist, said there has been a change in menus at several places.

Zahid Nazmi, a printer from Borivli and a food connoisseur who frequents food joints during Ramzan, said, "The usual thrill seems to be missing. Many popular mutton and beef dishes are off the menu. Slow-cooked items are also unavailable."

Gun attack: Farooq questions security lapse

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

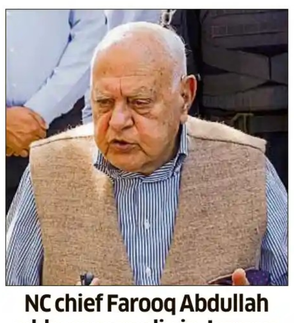
A day after escaping an "assassination" attempt at a wedding in Jammu, NC chief and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah on Thursday termed his survival an act of "divine intervention" and questioned the "total absence" of police deployment at the high-profile event where the gun attack took place.

The 88-year-old leader was attending a wedding reception on Wednesday night when a man allegedly fired at him from close range. Abdullah escaped unhurt after his security personnel quickly overpowered the assailant.

Recalling the incident, Abdullah said he initially mistook the gunshot for a firecracker. "Later, I realised it was a gunshot. God saved me," he told reporters while reacting to the incident.

The veteran politician, however, raised concerns over security arrangements at the venue, saying there was no visible police presence despite the presence of several prominent political figures.

"There were many important people present there. There should have been proper arrangements. But there was a total absence of police deployment," Abdullah said, urging authorities to examine the apparent security lapse.


NC chief Farooq Abdullah addresses media in Jammu, on Thursday. PTI

During preliminary questioning, the accused, Kamal Singh Jamwal, allegedly told investigators that he had been harbouring a grudge against Abdullah for years and had been waiting for an opportunity to kill him.

According to sources, Jamwal claimed he wanted to assassinate the former chief minister for nearly two decades.

Security officials said initial investigations suggest the attack appears to have been driven by a personal motive, with no immediate indication of a terror angle.

However, agencies are examining how the assailant managed to get close to a Z-plus-protected leader at a crowded public event.

The incident has triggered concern over security arrangements for senior political leaders attending social gatherings in Jammu and Kashmir.

Several political leaders condemned the attack and expressed relief that Abdullah was unharmed, while demanding a detailed inquiry.

Oppn blames statehood revocation

Mallikarjun Kharge

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Raising the assassination attempt on former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah in Rajya Sabha, the Opposition on Thursday blamed the revocation of statehood for the incident, with Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge claiming that a conspiracy is being hatched to eliminate important leaders.

Even as the Modi government promised a comprehensive investigation, Kharge referred to the Wednesday night incident in Srinagar in the Upper House during Zero Hour and said Abdullah's security was under threat because the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir was revoked.

He claimed that no such incident could occur when local security and police arrangements were previously with the state government.

"The situation in J&K today is because the security is with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) after the revocation of statehood. Law and order have broken down, and a conspiracy is being hatched to eliminate important leaders," he said.

Kharge said Abdullah was saved by a whisker and asked, "Is it the intention of the government to kill Farooq Abdullah. If the intention was to safeguard him, he should have had full security cover."

GREETING NEW GOVERNOR

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee greets newly appointed Governor RN Ravi during his swearing-in ceremony, at Lok Bhavan in Kolkata, on Thursday. PTI

Kashmiri leader granted bail

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Supreme Court on Thursday granted bail to Kashmiri separatist leader Shabir Ahmed Shah in a terror funding case, in which he was arrested by the National Investigation Agency on June 4, 2019.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said a detailed order will follow with some stringent bail conditions on Shah. It passed the order after hearing rejoinder arguments on behalf of Shah.

ED attaches Rs 581-cr assets in case against Anil Ambani's group

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday said it has attached fresh assets worth more than Rs 581 crore as part of its investigation against RHFL and RCFL, companies of Reliance Group Chairman Anil Ambani.

A provisional order was issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on March 11 to attach land parcels in Goa, Kerala, Karnataka, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said in a statement.

The properties are worth Rs 581.65 crore, and they have been attached as part of a probe related to the Reliance Home Finance Limited (RHFL) and Reliance Commercial Finance Limited (RCFL), the agency said.

"The attachment follows search operations conducted on March 6 in the case against Reliance Power Limited under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)," said the probe agency.

The ED had attached assets of Anil Ambani's Reliance Group earlier as well.

"The cumulative Reliance Anil Ambani Group attachment has reached Rs 16,310 crore," the ED said.

Bank complaints

The probe stems from a CBI FIR filed against RCFL and RHFL based on complaints lodged by Yes Bank, Union Bank of India and Bank of Maharashtra.

It is alleged that the two companies raised public funds from multiple banks and financial institutions, and more than Rs 11,000 crore of these funds turned into non-performing assets, the ED said.

DECCAN HERALD
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A reset for ease of business

The Union Cabinet's decision to ease restrictions on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from China underlines India's renewed efforts to boost manufacturing in specified sectors. The move revokes an April 2020 amendment through Press Note 3 (PN3) that restricted investment from countries with which India shares a land border. Through the amendment, the government stipulated that investments from land border countries (LBCs) in India can only be done under the government route. While the stated objective was to prevent "opportunistic" takeover or acquisition of Indian companies during the Covid-induced crisis, the move also kept Chinese capital away after the deadly Galwan clash in June 2020.

There was strategic and political rationale in reducing engagement with China following the border flare-up. But the world has changed over the six years since the clash and has witnessed major economic and geopolitical shifts. China enjoys primacy in manufacturing, with proven prowess in critical areas such as electronics. It controls the supply chains of many components critical to the modern economy. For India to power its manufacturing ambitions, it needs to establish its presence in the global supply chains. A policy that promotes better economic and business relations with China is in the country's interest. Bilateral trade has grown steadily even after the Galwan standoff, though the equation favours China. Diplomatic ties have improved. Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited China in August-September 2025. In October, direct flights between the two countries resumed after a five-year break, further signalling a thaw in ties.

Relaxing FDI restrictions signals India's intent to leverage Chinese capital and technology

India has a strong case to improve its FDI inflows, considering the uncertainties that prevail around its trade and economic relations with the United States. According to the new guidelines, investors with non-controlling LBC beneficial ownership of up to 10% are allowed through the automatic route, subject to conditions. Entities from LBCs wishing to invest in specific sectors will have their proposals processed and decided within 60 days. Other provisions in the amended policy, too, clear the way for easier investment by Chinese companies. The move is expected to reset the situation, significantly improving the ease of doing business. These amendments come at a time when India remains locked in standoffs with China on multiple fronts. The two countries have unresolved differences and India has raised concerns over China's conduct. While closer economic ties are necessitated by geopolitical interests, these relaxations must be seen as independent of policies that steer India's strategic engagement with its neighbour.

Lessons from the LPG crunch

India is grappling with a severe shortage of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), which exposes the vulnerability of a country heavily dependent on imported energy. The immediate trigger lies in the war in West Asia, which has disrupted global energy supply chains and shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz. As one of the world's largest LPG importers, India has been forced to ration stocks and manage consumption. The Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has directed oil marketing companies to prioritise domestic cooking gas, but this has sharply curtailed commercial LPG supplies. A mandatory 25-day gap between domestic bookings has also been introduced to prevent panic buying and hoarding. Karnataka, particularly Bengaluru, illustrates the scale of the disruption. The city's vast network of small eateries, messes, catering units, and paying guest accommodations depends almost entirely on commercial LPG, forcing many establishments to cut operations or temporarily shut down as supplies dry up. The shortage has also sparked a political blame game, with the state government accusing the Centre of mismanaging supply priorities. Compounding the crisis is a parallel disruption in piped natural gas (PNG), with nearly 1,500 industries and commercial units in Karnataka facing supply curbs as gas is diverted to protect household consumption and transport fuel.

Shortage exposes serious supply vulnerabilities, calling for a quicker transition to alternative energy sources

The scarcity has inevitably fuelled a thriving black market. Reports suggest domestic cylinders are being sold at exorbitant prices, while commercial cylinders are fetching several times their official rate. The Karnataka government must act swiftly to curb such profiteering. District-level special task forces should conduct surprise inspections of gas agencies and establish a round-the-clock whistle-blower helpline to report overpricing and hoarding. Swift prosecution of offenders will be essential to restore public confidence. At the same time, the crisis demands responsible behaviour from consumers. Households and commercial establishments must voluntarily reduce consumption by adopting fuel-efficient cooking methods and avoiding unnecessary stockpiling.

More importantly, the present disruption should serve as a wake-up call to accelerate the transition to alternative energy sources. Solar-powered cooking technologies, rooftop solar electricity that can run induction stoves, and biogas plants offer viable pathways to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Every crisis carries a lesson. The LPG crisis is more than a logistical bottleneck; it is a warning that tethering a basic necessity like a kitchen flame to volatile global supply chains is a strategic gamble. The country must transform this temporary scarcity into a long-term opportunity by reimagining a future powered increasingly by renewable alternatives.

GRID UNDER STRESS

Data centres test India's energy discipline

The AI infrastructure push must be backed with efficiency-linked approvals and smart resource management

RISHIKA RANGA

In February, India wrapped up its Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit with the New Delhi Declaration – a bold vision signed by over 92 countries that commits to using AI in an inclusive, equitable, and socially beneficial manner. Alongside that came something more tangible: announcements of over $200 billion in investments for AI infrastructure and hyper-scale data centres.

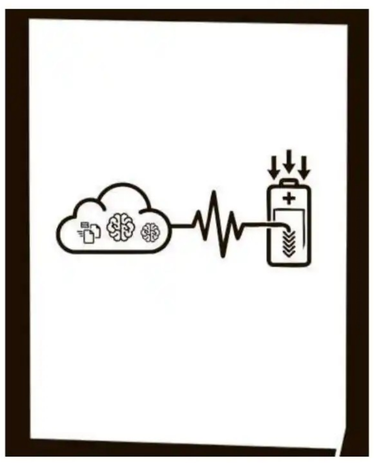
Two days later, on February 23, the city council of Denver, Colorado, proposed a moratorium on new data centres due to mounting pressure on land, energy, and water resources. Denver is not an outlier. Over the last few years, many regions have paused, capped, or restricted data centre development.

Data centres underpin India's rapidly expanding digital economy – from Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Aadhaar, and over-the-top (OTT) platforms to cloud software and AI applications. But is the country prepared for the constant and immense electricity demands of data centres? This question is especially crucial because how India scales AI infrastructure will influence the pace and direction of its energy transition.

The Ministry of Power (MoP) estimates that electricity demand from data centres could reach 13.6 gigawatts (GW) by 2031-32, roughly equivalent to the power demand of five Bengaluru-sized cities. At this scale, data centres begin to resemble heavy industries (such as steel plants or aluminium smelters) but without the regulatory scrutiny that usually accompanies them. Adding to this, these centres are geographically concentrated in resource-stressed urban hubs grappling with constrained transmission networks. Mumbai hosts over 70 data centres; Hyderabad, Delhi NCR, Bengaluru, and Chennai host around 30 each.

Fortunately for India, countries such as Ireland, Singapore, and the United States experienced the data centre boom in the early 2010s, giving us a template on what mistakes to avoid and what solutions could work. Ireland offers perhaps the clearest cautionary tale. Once known as the data centre capital, the country imposed restrictions on new data centre connections in key regions in 2021. Multiple rounds of public consultations were conducted, with an electricity policy for data centres – the Large Energy User Action Plan – issued in January 2026. The policy requires data centres to provide on-site or local generation and/or storage capacity to match their demand and mandates that at least 80% of annual electricity consumption be met through renewable energy (RE).

Singapore, too, paused new approvals for data centres between 2019 and 2022. During that period, the government worked with industry and academia to develop mandatory energy efficiency standards for IT equipment, aiming to reduce energy consumption by at least 30%. Today, Singapore offers targeted incentives such as tax exemptions and funding for data centres that can demonstrate measurable carbon reductions.



In 2020, the Amsterdam Duurzaam Digital policy mandated a Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) of 1.2 or lower for data centres. Amsterdam also stopped approvals for hyper-scale data centres (above 70 megawatt [MW] and 10 hectares) in 2024.

In the US, approvals are largely handled at a state level. In Georgia, a special commission on data centre energy planning has been proposed to review both electricity and water use, as well as to develop new energy efficiency guidelines. The state has also proposed a bill to halt all projects until March 2027, giving planning departments time to set the necessary policies for regulating data centres. Virginia will review several bills on data centres, including bills proposing a temporary moratorium and stricter planning restrictions on water and energy use. In Texas, data centres are required to participate in demand management programmes or disconnect from the grid during supply shortages.

China launched a three-year action plan in 2021 with clear quantitative targets, followed by several updates since. These targets include a PUE below 1.25, RE requirements of up to 80% in national hub cities, and deliberate siting of data centres near large solar and wind farms.

India's learning: Plan, then execute

The demand for data centres is real and rising. India's challenge is, therefore, not whether to build data centres, but how, where, and at what pace.

First, planning is not optional. Resource adequacy and long-term load forecasting must account for data centres. This requires coordination between the Central Electricity Authority, distribution companies, and state load dispatch centres. India already plans and forecasts the electricity requirements for other large bulk consumers such as railways, metro systems, and heavy industries. Data centres, emerging as a comparable and inflexible base load, remain outside this framework.

Second, approvals must be linked to grid readiness and energy efficiency standards, and connectivity should depend on transmission availability. Fast-track, single-window clearances for projects may look attractive, but they are risky for infrastructure that locks in demand for decades.

Finally, India needs to rethink its incentive structure for data centres. Today, central and state governments offer generous subsidies for AI infrastructure – 20-year tax holidays, capital investment credits, and power tariff concessions. Instead of blanket support, incentives should be tied to performance obligations, such as on-site or local storage, participation in demand-response markets, RE procurement, and progressively lower PUE benchmarks. As small modular reactor technologies scale, this option can also be incorporated.

To capitalise on the AI boom, India must act with intent, building capacity in phases, developing a regulatory framework, and conserving already stressed local resources.

(The writer is a Senior Associate in the Energy Policy and Regulations group at the Centre for Study of Science, Technology and Policy [CSTEP], a research-based think tank)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Friday the 13th, up close

One anxious journey helped me shed an enduring superstition

JYOTHI IDICULLA

The second Friday of this month (March) is the oft-feared Friday the 13th. The combination of this day and date is dreaded by many, often evoking images of pitch-dark nights, a new moon, and the continuous howling of wolves. On seeing the date, I was reminded of my own encounter with this fearsome combination, which once filled me with intense paraskevidekatriaphobia — fear of Friday the 13th.

A few years ago, I was *en route* to Mangaluru by air from Bengaluru. It was a Friday the 13th. As I glanced at my boarding pass, I noticed that my seat, printed in bold letters, was 13A, and I was to enter the aircraft through gate 13. Nervously, I proceeded, my heartbeats palpable in my chest. As I fastened my seatbelt, frissons of fear struck me. I said a silent prayer and held on to my prayer beads. Each jerk and shake during the flight sent shivers down my spine, with drops of sweat forming on my forehead. Finally, the flight landed safely, and I breathed a sigh of relief. From then on, I have travelled on seat number 13 on flights, buses, and trains with aplomb, shedding off my superstitions.

Thirteen has been associated with ill luck since the time of Hammurabi and in Norse mythology. Triskaidekaphobia, or fear of the number 13 in Christianity, is associated with the Last Supper of Jesus, where 13 gathered, and on the next day, Friday, Jesus was crucified. However, Corinthians Chapter 13 contains the universally quoted words on love. In Islam, 13 does not surface as a sign of fate or omen. In Hinduism, the 13th day denotes deep devotion and connection to Lord Shiva, and 13 is considered an auspicious number. In Judaism, 13 is a number pointing to Divine Mercy. An article, titled *Le Chateau de Carini*, in the French literary magazine *Revue de Paris* by Italian author Marquis de Salvo, circa 1830s, states, "It is always Fridays and the number 13 that bring bad luck".

For mathematicians, 13 is an integer—an odd number sandwiched between 12 and 14. For the baker, a dozen is sometimes thirteen. Many hospitals skip room number 13, and some elevators omit the 13th floor. There are some who find 13 lucky too. Singer Taylor Swift, born on December 13, 1989, turned 13 on Friday, the 13th. She links the number to successful releases and awards and even had it tattooed on her arm. Our former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was another who reportedly considered 13 his lucky number.

Every year has at least one Friday the 13th, which can go up to three. Any month starting on a Sunday has an infamous Friday the 13th. A person of 80 years would have lived through approximately 136 Fridays the 13th in his or her lifetime. Friday is just another day, and 13 is just another number. What has luck to do with it?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Strengthen governor's role by upholding Constitutional values

This refers to 'Governor reshuffle and federal tensions' (March 12). A governor must exercise independent judgment, remaining neutral and above political leanings, which is easier said than done. Governors have a legitimate role in ensuring constitutional propriety and preventing elected governments from overstepping their bounds. Transfers and reshuffles are routine; the focus should be on how new incumbents conduct themselves. If they uphold constitutional values with fairness and impartiality, the institution will be strengthened. In the current political climate, however, governors seldom act in a manner befitting their position.

M Barathi, Bengaluru

For better public mobility

I refer to 'Finance panel favours congestion fee in Bengaluru' (March 11). Implementing congestion fees and rational parking charges could alleviate Bengaluru's traffic woes. The city's roads are choked by private vehicles and public land used for parking by schools and commercial establishments. Congestion pricing has worked in cities like London and New York, reducing gridlock and improving air quality. Digital systems can ensure transparent fee collection, with fair charges and penalties. Citizens accept such systems as necessary for equitable public space use.

H N Ramakrishna, Bengaluru

Time for a crackdown

The government's warning to hotels about using domestic LPG cylinders and the Income Tax Department's detection of massive tax evasion (concealed turnover estimated at Rs 70,000 crore) highlight the problem and a potential solution. Citizens pay taxes for national betterment; businesses must do the same honestly. Similar cash-based practices occur in PG rentals and property registrations in Tier-1 cities like Bengaluru, Delhi, and Chennai (undervaluation to save tax, with cash payments). The I-T Department must track offline cash transactions and under-reported deals, ensuring fair tax collection and boosting the economy without burdening honest citizens.

Anand Mestru, Kalaburagi

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

Comparing the current energy crisis with the Covid crisis is absurd.

Arvind Sawant, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP (on PM Narendra Modi's comment that India will overcome the energy crisis like Covid 19)

In politics, absurdity is not an obstacle; it is a means.

Victor Hugo

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

Police caught in a leadership vacuum

The reform India's policing needs is a leadership that inspires with integrity and is committed to the rule of law

O P SINGH

For more than four decades, the debate on policing in India has revolved around reforms. Committees have been constituted, commissions have submitted detailed reports, and the judiciary has repeatedly emphasised structural changes. The Supreme Court's landmark judgment in 2006 in *Prakash Singh vs Union of India* laid down directions intended to insulate the police from undue interference and to professionalise the organisation. Yet, the everyday reality of policing often remains unchanged. The uncomfortable truth is that police institutions do not transform merely through reform; they are shaped by the quality of leadership.

Policing is ultimately a human enterprise. Laws, manuals, and administrative structures provide the framework, but the character and credibility of the police force depend on the men and women who lead it. A capable leader can inspire professionalism even within imperfect systems, while weak leadership can neutralise even the most well-designed reforms. In this sense, policing today needs leadership perhaps more urgently than it needs another round of reforms.

One of the most visible manifestations of weak leadership appears in the sphere of criminal investigation. Investigation is the backbone of the criminal justice system. It requires integrity, professional competence, and a relentless commitment to uncover the truth. However, the investigation's effectiveness greatly depends on whether higher-level leadership is willing to protect the investigative process from external pressures.

In many situations, the investigating officer on the ground is willing to pursue evidence honestly. But the tone of the investigation is often determined by signals coming from senior leadership. When leaders hesitate to insulate investigators from political or social pressure, the investigation begins to lose its independence. Subtle suggestions, cautious advice, or a conspicuous silence in sensitive cases can send powerful messages down the chain of command. Gradually, investigation ceases to be a search for truth and becomes an exercise in managing outcomes.

Politics inevitably interacts with policing in a democratic society. However, problems arise when police leadership begins to expand the space of discretion to accommodate political interests. In such situations, two troubling tendencies often emerge. First, there is a lack of institutional courage – leaders hesitate to take firm decisions where influential individuals or groups are involved. Second, the enforcement of the law becomes selective.

Selective policing is one of the most corrosive developments in any criminal justice system. When ordinary citizens see the law being applied rigorously to the weak but cautiously to the powerful, confidence in the system begins to erode. The perception gradually takes root that policing is negotiable, that influence can bend procedure, and that accountability is unevenly distributed.

This phenomenon often results in what may be described as protective policing for the rich and powerful. Cases involving influential persons sometimes witness delays in registration of complaints, hesitant investigation, or procedural lapses that weaken prosecution. These outcomes rarely occur in isolation. They are frequently the consequence of signals transmitted through leadership behaviour.

Young police officers watch these patterns closely. If they observe that professional courage is neither protected nor rewarded, they quickly learn to adapt. Instead of prioritising integrity, they begin to cultivate caution. The moral compass of the organisation begins to shift. The cost of such leadership failure is immense. Honest officers become disillusioned. Initiative diminishes. Public trust declines.

Setting an example

Leadership in policing, therefore, requires something deeper than administrative efficiency. It demands moral courage. A police leader must send a clear message throughout the organisation: the law will be applied uniformly, and investigations will follow evidence rather than influence. Political pressures may exist, but leadership must define the limits within which those pressures can operate.

When police leadership demonstrates fairness and firmness, the rank and file gain confidence. Investigators feel protected. Citizens feel reassured that justice is possible. Conversely, when leadership becomes hesitant or selectively discretionary, the entire organisation gradually adjusts itself to serve influence rather than law.

Reforms are undoubtedly necessary. Modern policing requires better technology, improved training, clearer procedures, and institutional safeguards against interference. But reforms alone cannot guarantee justice. Without leadership that is courageous, impartial, and committed to the rule of law, reforms remain little more than administrative documents.

The true strength of policing lies not in the number of reforms enacted but in the quality of leadership that guides the force. Institutions change when leaders choose principle over convenience, courage over caution, and justice over influence. Until such leadership becomes the norm, the promise of police reform will remain incomplete.

(The writer is a former DGP, Uttar Pradesh, and president, Indian Police Foundation)

R N Ravi in Bengal: When the *khela* moves from the streets to Lok Bhavan

P JOHN J KENNEDY

When Mamata Banerjee declared *khela hobe* (the game is on) ahead of the 2021 elections, she meant the political contest in West Bengal would be fought in rallies, campaigns, and ballot boxes. With the appointment of R N Ravi as the state's new governor, however, Mamata fears that the "game" may now shift to a different arena—the governor's office itself.

Technically, governors are appointed and transferred by the Union government, and such decisions are presented as routine administrative exercises. However, in the present political climate, they are rarely perceived as neutral. Ravi's transfer to West Bengal comes at a time when tensions between the Union government and non-BJP-ruled states are high. Mamata's immediate complaint that she was not consulted before the appointment may sound procedural, but it points to a deeper concern: that Lok Bhavan is increasingly being used as a political instrument rather than a constitutional office.

Her fears are rooted in experience. Consider Ravi's tenure in Tamil Nadu, during which he repeatedly attempted to shape political narratives. Immediately after his appointment in 2021, he entered into a confrontation with the DMK government led by M K Stalin, a standoff that persisted throughout his tenure. Disputes erupted over everything from legislative procedures to ideological questions. Bills passed by the Assembly were held up for months. He openly criticised government policies. In an unprecedented moment, he refused to read parts of the governor's address in the Assembly and walked out several times in protest. Such actions transformed the governor from a largely ceremonial figure into a constant political protagonist. Every confrontation created headlines and fuelled an ongoing narrative of conflict between the Centre's representative and the elected state government. For critics, this was a textbook example of how a constitutional office could be deployed to keep a state government politically on the defensive.

However, the Tamil Nadu experiment also revealed the limits of such a strategy. The DMK government did not weaken under pressure. If anything, the repeated confrontations strengthened its claim that it was defending the state's autonomy and cultural identity against interference from New Delhi. Tamil language and cultural pride, a powerful political force, turned Ravi's activism into a rallying point for the ruling party rather than a liability. Which brings us to the obvious question: why send him to Bengal now?

The answer may lie in the precedent set earlier in the state by Jagdeep Dhankhar, who served as governor before being elevated to the vice president's office. Dhankhar's tenure was marked by relentless public criticism of the Trinamool Congress government. His frequent statements on law and order, administrative decisions, and governance issues kept the Mamata government under constant scrutiny. Every day, the nation witnessed the political tussle between the Lok Bhavan and the state secretariat played out in public, a spectacle indeed.

However, out of such confrontations, the BJP gained political utility. Although the Trinamool Congress successfully retained power in 2021, it could not stop the dramatic expansion of the BJP in Bengal. It emerged as the principal opposition party. Through his activism, the governor ensured that controversies and differences remained in the headlines, helping the BJP reinforce its narrative against the state government. Viewed through this lens, R N Ravi's appointment cannot be a routine transfer. It certainly looks like the continuation of a political strategy that is to employ Lok Bhavan as a pressure point in opposition-ruled states. This strategy, however, comes with risks. Just like Tamil Nadu, Bengal's political culture is also heavily grounded in regional pride and resistance to centralisation. Like Stalin, Mamata has framed her politics as a battle against authoritarianism to defend and protect Bengal's identity. Hence, the danger is that if Lok Bhavan becomes an active site of political confrontation, it could easily reinforce that narrative.

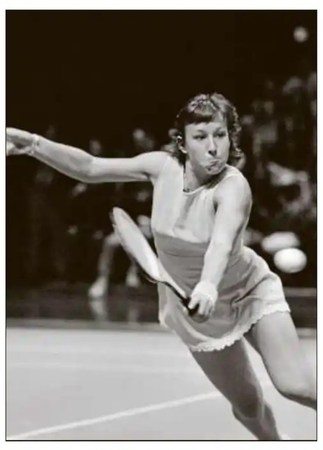
Let us not forget the larger constitutional question at stake here. The Indian Constitution envisages the Governor as a neutral link between the Union and the state governments. But the growing frequency of clashes between governors and elected governments in states such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal suggests that the office is increasingly being drawn into partisan politics. The Sarkaria Commission, which studied Centre-state relations in the 1980s, had recommended that chief ministers be consulted before governors are appointed to their states. The aim was precisely to avoid the perception that governors are political appointees sent to manage or pressure state governments. Over time, however, this convention has been honoured more in the breach than in practice.

Ravi's arrival in Bengal, therefore, symbolises a broader shift in Indian federal politics. Lok Bhavan is no longer merely a ceremonial residence; it is increasingly becoming a strategic outpost in the political contest between the Union and Opposition-ruled states. Whether this will help the BJP strengthen its position in Bengal remains uncertain. The Tamil Nadu experience suggests that confrontational gubernatorial politics can sometimes backfire, strengthening the very governments it seeks to challenge. If that lesson holds true, the attempt to use the governor's office as a political instrument may end up energising Mamata Banerjee rather than weakening her. For now, however, one thing is clear: the next phase of Bengal's political *khela* may not be fought only in rallies or elections. It may also unfold in the constitutional theatre of Lok Bhavan, where the line between governance and politics is becoming increasingly blurred.

(The writer is an educator and political analyst based in Bengaluru)

Members of the Iranian football team who chose to remain in Australia this week are far from the first to travel to a competition and stay there

VICTOR MATHER



(Clockwise from top): Several members of the Iranian women's football team accepted asylum offers from Australia after participating in the AFC Women's Asian Cup last week; Sergei Nemtsanov, a Soviet diver, defected, briefly, after the Montreal Olympics, 1976; Martina Navratilova from Czechoslovakia defected after the 1975 US Open; Krystsina Tsimanouskaya of Belarus defected to Poland after Tokyo Olympics 2021; and Iraq's Raed Ahmed defected after the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. NYT

For some athletes, major events can be an opportunity to defect

Several members of the Iranian women's football team have accepted asylum offers from Australia after playing in a tournament there, choosing not to return to a country locked in a spiralling conflict.

The women had stood silent in apparent protest during the national anthem before their first game at the Asian Cup on the Gold Coast, drawing condemnation from some in their home country, including calls for severe punishment.

The players' decision to stay in Australia was a dramatic development for the AFC Women's Asian Cup, but it is not the first time athletes have arrived for a competition, and then decided to stay. International sports competitions, including the Olympics, have long provided an opportunity for athletes hoping to leave their home countries to defect and seek asylum.

Here are some high-profile instances:

Hungarians After the Revolution, 1956: The 1956 Summer Olympics in Melbourne, Australia, came at the height of the Cold War. Indeed, just a month before the Games began, the Soviet Union had invaded Hungary to put down an uprising against the communist government. More than 40 Hungarian athletes and officials declined to return to their country after the Games.

A semifinal men's water polo game between Hungary and the Soviet Union was the crucible for all the ill feelings. Players taunted, kicked and punched each other. Angry pro-Hungarian spectators nearly rioted, rushing to the poolside, where police restrained them. The game became known as "Blood in the Pool." Hungary won 4-0, and at least several members of the team stayed in Australia after the Games.

A Tennis phenom and future superstar, 1975: Martina Navratilova arrived at the US Open in 1975 as a two-time Grand Slam finalist and an up-and-coming star from Czechoslovakia. But officials in her home country worried that Navratilova, 18 at the time, was becoming too westernised, and were apparently thinking of limiting her travel and preventing her from playing in certain competitions. After a semifinal loss to Chris Evert in New York, she defected.

"My tennis federation gave me a hard time. I couldn't play the tournaments I wanted. Couldn't travel where I wanted," she told *The New York Times* in 1976. "I did it to be free." She wound up winning 18 Grand Slam singles titles.

In 2008, she became a citizen of the democratic Czech Republic, while remaining a US citizen.

Contretemps over a diver, 1976: A 17-year-old Soviet diver, Sergei Nemtsanov, placed ninth in the platform event at the Montreal Olympics in 1976, and then announced he was staying in the city. There were reports that he had fallen for an American diver.

Soviet officials reacted furiously, saying that Nemtsanov had been "abducted and brainwashed by provocateurs." They even threatened to pull their team out of the last few days of the Games.

Nemtsanov was given permission by Canada to stay. But after a few weeks, he had second thoughts and returned to the Soviet Union. He competed again for the Soviet Union at the 1980 Olympics.

Carrying the flag, then leaving it behind, 1996: Weight lifter Raed Ahmed was given the honour of carrying the Iraqi flag at the opening ceremony of the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. Before the Games were over, he had defected.

Ahmed acknowledged that he had been thinking about defecting even as he was carrying the flag. A Shiite Muslim, he said he had faced persecution in Iraq, then still run by Saddam Hussein, a Sunni. "I love my country," Ahmed said. "I just don't like the regime."

He settled in the large Arab community in Dearborn, Michigan, and was able to return and see family members in Iraq after Saddam's fall.

A brief mass exodus, 2018: More than 200 athletes and officials, most of them from African nations, applied for visas to remain in Australia after the Commonwealth Games in 2018. Their decision became a hot-button issue in the country, which had a mixed record on admitting asylum-seekers. Some Australian officials sternly warned that the athletes should not try to "game the system."

The next year, the government denied the bulk of the asylum applications.

Airport drama, 2021: Krystsina Tsimanouskaya of Belarus went to the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 expecting to compete in the 100- and 200-metre dashes. But her coaches, at the last minute, pulled her from the 200 and entered her in a relay instead. After she publicly criticised the decision, she was told she would be sent home. Belarusian officials claimed she was unwell.

She was taken to the airport but became concerned. "My parents called me and told me not to come home, because it would be unsafe, considering they already started talking on TV that I was mentally ill," she said. "It was obvious that upon arrival at the airport I would not get home, but they would immediately take me somewhere."

Before she was put on a plane, she approached Japanese police at the airport, seeking help. Officers surrounded her and she did not board the plane.

She was eventually offered asylum in Poland and moved there, becoming a Polish citizen in 2022. She represented that country in the 2024 Games, running a relay, and the 200.

The New York Times

AI-based attendance is a privacy crisis

SAGARI GUPTA

In late 2025, the Nagpur Municipal Corporation rolled out facial recognition attendance for thousands of its sanitation workers. Attendance is now recorded through a mobile app requiring facial scans. Movement is tracked by GPS through the working day. The system does not ask whether the worker consents. It asks whether they want the job.

This is not an efficiency upgrade. It is a surveillance architecture built on top of the most vulnerable segment of India's workforce, dressed in the language of governance reform.

The problems are technical before they are philosophical. Years of physical labour wear fingerprints smooth. Facial recognition software fails regularly in low light and dusty conditions. GPS systems place workers in the wrong location. When the machine records an absence that did not happen, there is no human supervisor to hear a correction. The algorithm is the final judge. The worker loses wages for hours she worked. That outcome is not a glitch. It is a policy choice about who bears the cost of error.

This matters because India already knows what algorithmic exclusion costs at scale. Between 2015 and 2018, the Right to Food Campaign documented starvation deaths in Jharkhand directly tied to Aadhaar-linked authentication failures in the Public Distribution System. Biometric systems failed to recognise the fingerprints of elderly and manual labourers. Ration cards were cancelled for non-linkage. Families lost access to food.

The Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee flagged authentication failure rates of 8 to 17% among NREGA workers in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana as a serious governance concern. The people most exposed to these failures were the people nobody asked before the system was designed.

AI-powered attendance systems in public employment repeat this structural error. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act of 2023, with rules notified in November 2025, classifies biometric data as sensitive personal information requiring explicit consent before collection. For a daily-wage worker, that consent is a fiction. The choice is between scanning your face and losing your livelihood. A signature on a form does not become voluntary because it sits next to a pen.

India's AI Governance Guidelines, released on November 5, 2025, do not address this. Their framework orients itself toward developers and deployers. Its seven *sutras* include People First, promising human-centric design and human empowerment. Sanitation workers are people. The framework does not reach them. The proposed AI Safety Institute carries no current mandate to audit workplace surveillance systems or assess whether continuous biometric tracking of low-wage workers is proportionate to the stated administrative goal.

The philosophical cost of this gap is not abstract. When an algorithm determines whether a worker was present, the citizen is no longer a deliberative agent. She becomes a data point, classified by a system she did not help design, corrected through a process she may not know exists, and penalised by a machine that records no context. India, given its plural social fabric and the concentration of low-wage work in public employment, faces an acute version of this risk. What gets encoded into these systems, whose threshold for acceptable error, whose definition of a valid biometric read, whose conception of what constitutes adequate supervision, is a political question. Treating it as a technical one does not resolve the politics. It removes them from scrutiny.

Three changes would make a concrete difference. Every AI-based attendance system in public employment must carry a human-operated backup. A biometric failure should trigger a human review, not a wage deduction. The AI Safety Institute should be mandated to conduct proportionality audits before surveillance systems are deployed on low-wage public workers, requiring employers to demonstrate that continuous biometric tracking is necessary and not merely administratively convenient. Workers must have the right to access, correct, and delete their biometric records. The DPDP Act grants these rights in principle. They need enforcement architecture with teeth.

The 2026 India-AI Impact Summit spoke of sovereign compute and AI for All. Across India's cities, sanitation workers now start their shifts by holding their faces up to a phone camera in the dark. Both things are true at the same time. The distance between them is the actual state of India's AI governance. If we build a digital India where the most exposed workers are tracked like equipment and left without recourse when machines err, we have not built a People First system. We have built a more efficient version of the same exclusion.

(The author is an independent researcher and policy writer)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: MARCH 1976

President's rule in Gujarat

New Delhi, March 12
Gujarat came under President's rule tonight as the Congress (O)-led Babubhai Patel Ministry bowed out of office following its defeat in the State Assembly this morning. President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed signed a proclamation under Article 356 of the Constitution, taking over the State administration after Governor K. K. Viswanathan, in his report, had said that no party enjoyed a stable majority and that the administration could not be carried on in accordance with the constitutional provisions.

25 YEARS AGO: MARCH 2001

Foreign investment not to be allowed in print media

New Delhi, March 12 (PTI)
The Government today said foreign investment would not be permitted in the print media sector and the Mid-Day Multimedia Company, which had earlier decided to issue limited shares to foreign investors, had now decided not to allocate these shares. Stating this in the Rajya Sabha in a written reply, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Sushma Swaraj said necessary directions to this effect had been issued to the RBI by the finance ministry.

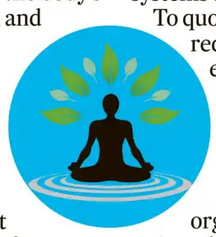
OASIS | LEELA RAMASWAMY

The body's wisdom: Nourish to flourish

In his inimitable style, Shakespeare makes Hamlet exclaim, 'What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculty; in form and moving, how express and admirable; in action, how like an angel...' There is great truth in these words, but more often than not, we are unaware of it in our day to day dealings.

We recognise this only when we lose these precious faculties. We use the body giving it little thought or care.

The Buddha subjected his body to extreme ascetic self-mortification and nearly died. He then realised that weakening the boy hindered mental clarity. It led him to adopt the 'Middle Path' that cared for the body's basic needs to attain a calm and focused mind.



Sadly, even today there are those who believe that torturing the body can bring satisfaction and closeness to the Divine.

The human body is a reservoir of wonders. To list a few facts – it is composed of roughly 100 trillion cells. It is more advanced than any computer. It has a heart that beats approximately three billion times in a lifetime and has 60,000 miles of blood vessels. It has systems that constantly regenerate.

To quote one example, 2.5 million red blood cells are produced every second. The nose can remember 50,000 different scents. The intestines, if stretched out, could cover a three-storied building.

The brain, an amazing organ, is the director of our actions, but it is the body that carries out its commands. When the body turns uncooperative, then the brain is close to being non-functional.

This is why we should take good care of our bodies. Nutritious food, exercise and a good outlook on Life is a must. We ignore these at our own peril. One was aghast to hear of an MBBS aspirant who cut off his foot to join the ranks of the disabled and win admission into a college. They say that it is only when the well runs dry that we realise the value of water. Likewise, it is only when we lose our physical abilities, that we understand the value of the body. We should keep in mind that it is no crime to nourish the body, for only a healthy body can sustain a healthy mind.

2 missing Kuki men found dead; NIA to investigate

21 Nagas, who were abducted in retaliation, were rescued on Thursday

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

Two Kuki men, allegedly abducted by Nagas on Wednesday, were found shot dead inside a jungle in the Kamjong district on Thursday morning, triggering fresh tensions in strife-torn Manipur.

This led the Kukis to block the highway connecting Naga-dominated Ukhrul with state capital Imphal, despite the presence of Central security forces, including the Army and Assam Rifles. Ukhrul and Kamjong share boundaries.

Manipur Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam told the Assembly on Thursday that armed Naga youths allegedly abducted the two men at the Thawai Kuki village in Ukhrul on Wednesday, before setting a few huts on fire.

"As the news of the abduction spread, armed Kuki men stopped three vehicles carrying 21 Tangkhul Nagas at Shangkai on the Imphal-Ukhrul Road and took them hostage," he said.

The Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM) — an apex body of the Kukis — said on Thursday that the bodies of Thenkhogin Baite (45) and Thangboimang Lunkim (35) were recovered from inside a forest, while a third victim, Letginthang Haokip, was found with bullet injuries. Lunkim was a displaced person who had taken shelter in the Thawai Kuki village, it said.

In a statement, the KIM said the three were abducted by suspected cadres of the Naga armed group NSCN-IM on Wednesday morning.

"This was in gross violation of the agreements on non-aggression between the Kuki and Tangkhul communities under the aegis of the Peace Working Committee and the Tangkhul Naga Long–Working Committee," it said.

Condemning the killings, the KIM demanded that the perpetrators be handed over to them and the case be given to the NIA for investigation.

Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh, speaking in the ongoing Assembly session, announced that the case would be handed over to the NIA, while an ex gratia would be soon given to the victims' kin.

Nagas rescued

At least 21 Nagas, whom armed Kuki persons had taken hostage on Wednesday in an apparent retaliation for the abduction of the Kukis, were freed around 3 am on Thursday.

Konthoujam said that following the abduction, Central forces, led by the BSF, were sent to rescue the abducted, but were stopped by women on the road.

Later in the evening, the Army stepped in and cordoned off the place where the Tangkhul Nagas were being held.

Konthoujam said the CM then sought the Union Home Ministry's help through Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla. The Naga villagers were released around 3 am after long negotiations.

Ukhrul has remained tense since a conflict started last month involving the Nagas and Kukis. Ukhrul is Naga-dominated, but has Kuki settlements in areas under the Litan Police Station.

'Have some respect': Top court rejects plea against war memorial

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Thursday declined to entertain a plea concerning a war memorial in Dehradun, telling the petitioner to respect those who laid down their lives in the line of duty.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi was hearing a plea challenging a January order of the Uttarakhand High Court.

The HC had dismissed the plea, which alleged that the land over which the war memorial "Sainya Dham" in the Dehradun district was to be constructed was forest land, and as such, should not be allowed for construction purposes.

Considering the challenge to the HC order, the bench asked the counsel representing the petitioner: "You have a problem with the construction of a war memorial?"

It added: "For those who have sacrificed their lives for the nation, at least have some respect. We will issue a show-cause notice to him. Let him come and explain, and we will hold an inquiry as to on whose instance he is filing this petition." The petitioner's counsel claimed that even the war memorial was not being properly constructed there.

The court opined that the petition should have been dismissed by the HC with exemplary costs. The bench asked the counsel how much cost should be imposed on the petitioner.

SC dismisses plea to bring Netaji's ashes from Japan

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to consider a plea seeking the return of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's ashes from Japan.

However, it clarified that the freedom fighter's heir must approach the court if she wants them brought to India.

Taking up the plea filed by Ashish Ray, grandnephew of Netaji Bose, a bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said that if Bose's heir wants the ashes to be brought to the country, she herself must come forward.

"We respect her sentiments and we would ensure her sentiments are translated into legal action," the bench, also comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi, said. The court's response came after senior advocate A M Singhvi, appearing for petitioner Ray, informed the bench that Anita Bose, daughter of Subhas Chandra Bose, was attending the hearing virtually and supported the petition.

The bench pointed out that similar petitions had been filed earlier and dismissed.

It also asked how many times the issue would come before the court.

Singhvi said this was not the same issue.

"Indirectly or directly... why is this petition coming up again? First of all, where are the ashes? What is that proof?" the bench asked him.

Singhvi said the sole heir was the daughter, who is now 84 years old and was present on the screen during the hearing.

He added that every head of state from India had visited the Renkoji Temple in Japan to pay obeisance to the ashes of Netaji, which are preserved there.

"First of all, we want to know how many surviving family members there are. He is one of the greatest leaders of this nation; there is no doubt about that. Some of us bow before him for his supreme sacrifice," the bench said.

"Let the heir come before us. If the heir wants the ashes to be brought to our country, the heir must come before us," the bench said.

Oppn hits out at TN govt as 17-year-old missing girl found dead in Thoothukudi

CHENNAI, DHNS: A 17-year-old student, who went missing on Tuesday, has been found dead with scratches on her neck at a secluded spot in Thoothukudi district, in a suspected case of sexual assault and murder.

The 12th standard student left her house in Vilathikulam at 6.30 pm on Tuesday but never returned. The parents went to Kulathur police station, but were allegedly told to file a complaint at the All Women Police Station in Vilathikulam, where they were again made to wait.

It took a prodding from the local MLA and the district Superintendent of Police for the police to file a complaint. "The girl was found dead. We are examining whether she was sexually assaulted," a police officer said.

The shocking incident gave enough fodder to the Opposition parties to criticise the DMK government on "poor maintenance" of law and order in the state. Leader of Opposition Edappadi K Palaniswami accused the Thoothukudi police of not acting with alacrity that is expected in dealing with a crime relating to women.

Former TN BJP chief K Annamalai said the 17-year-old girl in Vilathikulam, who was sexually assaulted and murdered, might still be alive today if the police had acted in time.

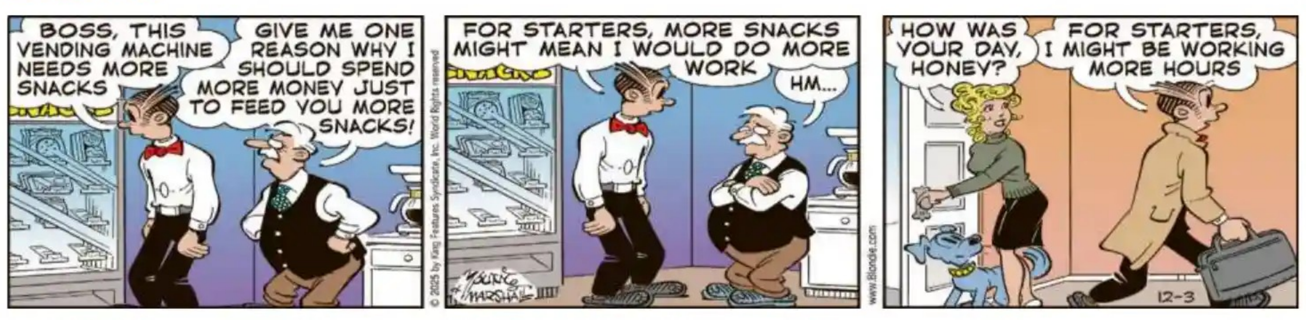
"Suspending a single police officer cannot be passed off as justice. It does little to address the larger failure. The atmosphere in TN has increasingly become unsafe for women and children under this useless DMK Govt," he alleged.

EPS said the tragedy has once again exposed the alarming failure of state government to ensure the safety of women and girls.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie



Hagar The Horrible

Beetle Bailey

Peanuts

Marvin

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

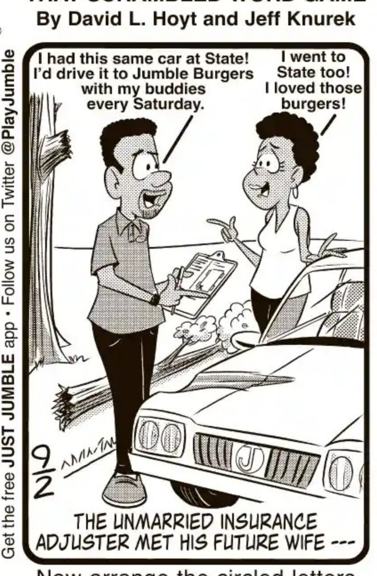
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TRPYA

ONBDU

SUICNO

CALEHB



Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

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Answer here: (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: MONTH NUDGE HOTTER HARDLY
Answer: When the thief lied in court about burying the money, he didn't tell the — "HOLE" TRUTH

◆SU-DO-KU-6853◆

		8					3	
7			8		6		2	
				5	4			7
9	1		6	2		5	4	
		5	7		1	2		
	6	4		8	9		7	3
3			2	1				
	4		9		5			6
	7					3		

easy

SOLUTION TO 6852

6	5	8	4	3	2	7	1	9
4	3	1	7	9	8	2	5	6
9	7	2	1	6	5	4	3	8
3	6	9	2	8	4	1	7	5
7	2	4	5	1	9	8	6	3
8	1	5	3	7	6	9	2	4
1	9	3	8	5	7	6	4	2
5	4	6	9	2	1	3	8	7
2	8	7	6	4	3	5	9	1

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

HITORI-3307

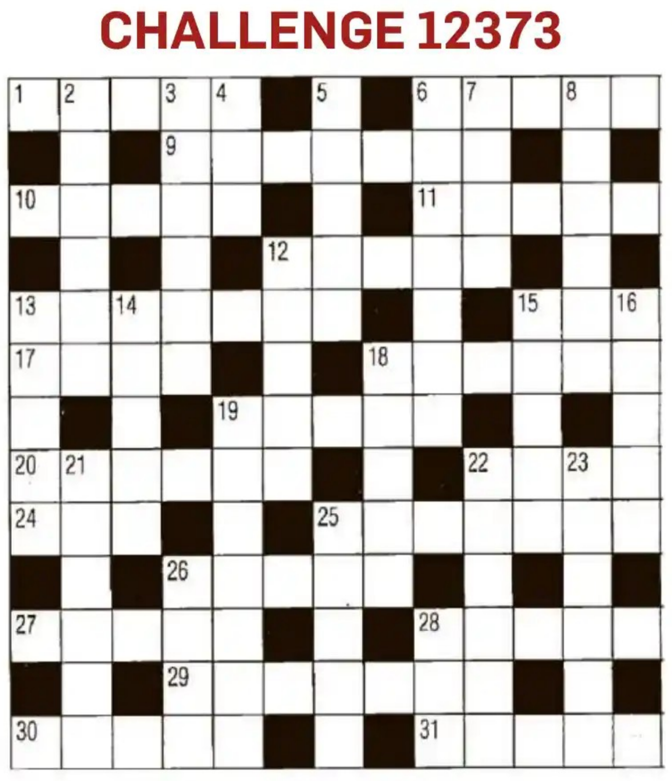
5	5	4	5	1	5	8	2
5	5	3	2	8	4	3	6
3	2	7	8	4	8	6	8
5	3	6	4	4	2	7	4
8	1	5	7	6	4	1	3
4	1	3	6	2	7	5	4
1	4	2	3	4	8	2	5
2	6	5	8	3	5	2	7

SOLUTION TO 3306

■	5	1	6	4	■	2	■
6	■	8	1	■	7	4	2
2	4	3	■	1	8	7	■
■	2	■	4	3	■	5	6
1	6	4	5	8	2	3	■
4	7	6	■	2	3	■	1
3	■	2	7	■	4	1	8
■	8	5	■	6	1	■	4

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12373



ACROSS
1 Hut (5)
6 Film award (5)
9 Proof of purchase (7)
10 Wash (5)
11 Creepy (5)
12 Seize without authority (5)
13 Fertiliser (7)
15 Hat (3)
17 Is indebted (4)
18 Amble (6)
19 Hackneyed (5)
20 Vipers (6)
22 Ripped (4)
24 Distress call (3)
25 Furniture item (7)
26 Pillow stuffing (5)
27 Celebrations (5)
28 Entire range (5)
29 Found (7)
30 Number (5)
31 Principle (5)

DOWN
2 Dent (6)
3 Muscular pains (6)
4 Knowledge (3)
5 Minimum (5)
6 Work (7)
7 Pace (4)
8 Beast (6)
12 Employers (5)
13 Unconscious states (5)
14 Repairs (5)
15 Punctuation mark (5)
16 Factory (5)
18 Piece of meat (5)
19 Treachery (7)
21 Give (6)
22 Angry speech (6)
23 Continue (6)
25 Rocklike lifeform (5)
26 Type of cabbage (4)
28 Obtain (3)

CRYPTIC

ACROSS
1 Initially great deficit to smooth over (5)
6 Doubtful strength? (5)
9 Officer apt to be taken in by a murderer (7)
10 You may go ahead and run out of it! (5)
11 Two nil? (5)
12 Quietly stand up and remove by force (5)
13 The noted powers landowners possess (7)
15 Looking embarrassed in a predicament (3)
17 Ah, a sailor and a captain! (4)
18 One of those falling, in effect? (6)
19 Bird needing a bit of chaperoning (5)
20 Hang around and look at it with hesitation (6)
22 Room for a holy man or sinner (4)
24 Lug out of the arena (3)
25 Robbers having wild parties (7)
26 Royal maids, possibly (5)
27 A Bohemian character to see and copy (5)
28 In disrobing, might he preen himself? (5)
29 A case of something legal to do (7)
30 Cold that makes a companion unwell (5)
31 She once bought a newspaper (5)

DOWN
2 It's wrong to lash out somewhat tardily (6)
3 Six-footer once thought divine (6)
4 He can't quite raise the mast (3)
5 They can brighten our nights (5)
6 Errand to a holy place? (7)
7 Nice change for a soccer star (4)
8 Get tough (6)
12 You could call him Rock (5)
13 It could get the golfer off to a flier! (5)
14 The beast takes a trip (5)
15 Bolt a plate while it's hot (5)
16 Youthful figures (5)
18 She finishes a drink for a Scot (5)
19 Screwy, shall we say? (7)
21 Stupid, endless whirl of fashion (6)
22 Truman, as writer (6)
23 Unit of a U.S. soldier in a Spanish city (6)
25 Poles pay out for a bloomer! (5)
26 A factory unpleasant to go through (4)
28 Tearaway type? (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12372

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 4, Bus-ily 7, China tea 8, Snatch 10, A-GI-le 13, Prop 14, Mini 15, Cr.-AB 16, We-t 17, Sh-OO 19, Afar 21, Play-fully 23, Alec 24, Is-la 26, Fry 27, Kale 29, S-can 32, (t)Here(in) 33, Sh-AM-e 34, Figure 35, Nine-ties 36, Pelota.
DOWN: 1, Sc-ram 2, Sit in 3, Cad-e 4, B-as-ra 5, S-OAP 6, Locker 9, No b-all 11, Gib 12, Lisle 13, Pro-file 15, Co-y 16, Way 18, Hacker 20, Fla-sh 21, Ply 22, US-e. 23, A-rrive 25, Jam 28, A-rena 30, Ca-bi-n 31, New-sy 32, Hugo 33, Step.

EASY
ACROSS: 4, Bedlam 7, Demerara 8, Steers 10, Angel 13, Dial 14, Lean 15, Hell 16, Pea 17, Read 19, Eras 21, Nocturnal 23, Cell 24, City 26, Raw 27, Aged 29, Odin 32, Bias 33, Snare 34, Otters 35, Perspire 36, Census.
DOWN: 1, Ideal 2, Omega 3, Oral 4, Basil 5, Duel 6, Agrees 9, Talent 11, Nee 12, Enrol 13, Deduces 15, Hat 16, Pal 18, Eclair 20, Rayon 21, New 22, Rid 23, Cattle 25, Fir 28, Gasps 30, David 31, Never 32, Bees 33, Sash.

SCRABBLE

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N1 M3 W4 R1 E1 I1 A1 — Triple Word Score — RACK 1

S1 N1 L1 O1 I1 G2 G2 — Triple Word Score — RACK 2

I1 I1 D2 S1 N1 D2 A1 — Triple Word Score — RACK 3

R1 R1 T1 A1 I1 O1 P3 — Triple Word Score — RACK 4

PAR SCORE 205-215
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

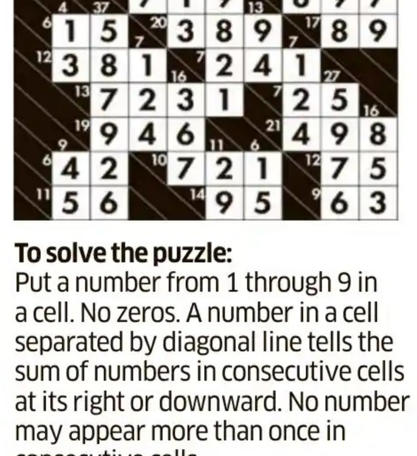
DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ROTATES	RACK 1	= 71
APACE	RACK 2	= 9
DERIDES	RACK 3	= 63
ENTREAT	RACK 4	= 64
PAR SCORE 135-145	JUDD'S TOTAL	207

KAKURO- 3307

SOLUTION TO 3306



To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3854

	2							3
	7		3					
					6			
		7			5		4	
2			7			8		
						9		
1	5			4				
			1	5		3		
6		2			9	4		

SOLUTION TO 3853

7	2	5	9	1	3	6	4	8
8	9	4	6	2	7	3	1	5
6	1	3	4	5	8	7	2	9
5	4	8	1	7	9	2	6	3
3	6	2	8	4	5	9	7	1
1	7	9	3	6	2	8	5	4
4	8	6	7	9	1	5	3	2
9	5	1	2	3	6	4	8	7
2	3	7	5	8	4	1	9	6

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

US and allies face off with Russia, China over Iran nuclear programme

They are blocking sanctions committee work to protect Tehran: Washington

NEW YORK, REUTERS

The US and Western allies clashed with Russia and China on Thursday over Iran's nuclear intentions, as Washington sought at the United Nations to further justify the war it launched on Iran two weeks ago.

At a meeting of the 15-member UN Security Council, which is chaired this month by the US, Russia and China moved unsuccessfully to block a discussion about a committee established to oversee and enforce UN sanctions on Iran. They were overruled 11-2 with two abstentions.

Addressing the council, US envoy to the United Nations Mike Waltz accused Moscow and Beijing of seeking to protect Tehran by blocking the work of the so-called 1737 Committee.

"All member states of the United Nations should be implementing an arms embargo against Iran, banning the transfer and trade of missile technology, and freezing relevant financial assets," Waltz said.

"The UN provisions to be re-imposed are not arbitrary, but instead narrowly scoped to address the threat posed by Iran's nuclear, missile and conventional arms programmes and Iran's ongoing support for terrorism," he said.

Waltz charged that both China and Russia did not want a functional sanctions committee "because they want to protect their partner, Iran, and continue to maintain defence cooperation that is now once again prohibited."

Rescue workers gather outside a damaged residential building as residents collect their belongings from the rubble in Tehran on Thursday. AFP

MIKE WALTZ
US envoy to the United Nations

"All member states of the United Nations should be implementing an arms embargo against Iran, banning the transfer and trade of missile technology, and freezing relevant financial assets.

Russia's UN ambassador Vasily Nebenzya charged that the US and its allies had "whipped up hysteria surrounding supposed plans Iran had to get a nuclear weapon" that were never corroborated by IAEA reports. "This was done in order to undertake yet another military venture against Tehran and to ensure great escalation of the situation in West Asia and beyond," he said.

China's representative, Fu Cong, called Washington the "instigator" of the Iranian nuclear crisis and said it had "resorted to blatant use of force against Iran during the negotiation process, which rendered the diplomatic efforts futile."

US President Donald Trump has used Iran's nuclear programme to justify his war on Iran. He said this month that Iran would have had a nuclear weapon within two weeks had the US not struck three key nuclear sites in June, a claim sources have said was not supported by US intelligence assessments.

Britain and France told the Security Council that re-imposing sanctions on Iran was justified by Tehran's failure to address concerns about its nuclear programme. France said the IAEA was no longer able to guarantee the peaceful nature of the programme and that Tehran's nuclear stockpile was sufficient for 10 nuclear devices.

US not ready to escort oil tankers: Energy Secy

WASHINGTON, AFP: The US military is currently "not ready" to escort tankers through the critical Strait of Hormuz because its assets are focused on striking Iran, Energy Secretary Chris Wright said on Thursday.

Wright's comments came as an attack on two oil tankers off Iraq killed at least one person and oil prices briefly surged past USD 100.

Since launching the war on Iran, US President Donald Trump has sought to calm markets by offering US Navy escorts for oil tankers and reinsurance facilities for shipping companies — but no escorts have yet taken place. "It'll happen relatively soon, but it can't happen now. We're simply not ready," Wright told CNBC. "All of our military assets right now are focused on destroying Iran's offensive capabilities and the manufacturing industry that supplies their offensive capabilities." He added that it was "quite likely" such escorts would begin by the end of the month.

On Tuesday, Wright sent oil prices see-sawing when he said US ships had carried out an escort, before his social media post was swiftly deleted and the White House denied that such an operation had occurred.

As Iran launches a new wave of attacks against Gulf energy targets, the International Energy Agency said the war "is creating the largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market".

Israel strikes central Beirut

BEIRUT, AFP: Israel renewed its strikes on Beirut on Thursday, as it threatened to expand operations and seize territory in Lebanon if Hezbollah did not stop its attacks.

The Israeli military issued a call to evacuate ahead of the central Beirut attack, after having also widened its evacuation warning for residents in southern Lebanon to include areas below the Zahrani river, around 40 km north of Israel.

After Hezbollah announced an operation against Israel on Wednesday, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said that he had ordered troops to "prepare for expanding" attacks. "If the Lebanese government does not know how to control the territory and prevent Hezbollah from threatening northern communities and firing toward Israel — we will take the territory and do it ourselves," Katz said.

Trump urges Iranian football team to skip World Cup

President Donald Trump said he did not think it would be "appropriate" for the Iranian soccer team to attend this year's World Cup, co-hosted by the US, and cited safety concerns as a reason on Thursday, AP/PTI reports from Washington.

"The Iran National Soccer Team is welcome to The World Cup," Trump wrote on his social media site, "but I really don't believe it is appropriate that they be there, for their own life and safety." Iranian leaders said earlier this week that it's "not possible" for the country to participate in the World Cup. Trump's message appears to depart somewhat from what the Republican president relayed Tuesday at the White House to FIFA President Gianni Infantino, who later publicly said that Trump assured him the Iranian players and coaches would be welcome.

A White House official, who insisted on anonymity, had confirmed Trump's message to Infantino about Iran's participation. On Thursday, the White House did not immediately clarify what Trump meant by "their own life and safety," such as whether he anticipated threats against them while in the US.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

A protester holds a placard reading "Don't touch our pensions" as he attends a demonstration during a nationwide strike by Belgian trade unions protesting unpaid labour, in Brussels, on Thursday. REUTERS

B'desh parliament pays tribute to Manmohan, Khamenei

▸ Bangladesh's Parliament on Thursday condoled the deaths of several national and international leaders, including former Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh, Bangladesh's Khaleda Zia and slain Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, PTI reports from Dhaka.

The maiden session of the 13th Parliament adopted a motion to condole the deaths. The initial list included 31 names, among them late Pope Francis and Matia Chowdhury, a former parliamentarian and leader of deposed premier Sheikh Hasina's Awami League. However, after the main opposition Jamaat-e-Islami insisted, the names of executed 1971 war criminals — tried as hardened collaborators of Pakistani troops during the country's Liberation War — were also included. The motion also listed those killed during the July–August mass protests that toppled the Sheikh Hasina government in August 2024. Newly elected Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, a veteran 1971 freedom fighter, agreed to incorporate the names of the executed war criminals after Jamaat claimed the initial list was "one-sided".

Google overhauls Maps app

▸ Google Maps will depend more heavily on artificial intelligence to help people figure out where they want to go and the best way to get there as part of a major redesign unveiled on Thursday, AP/PTI reports from New York.

The overhaul driven by Google's Gemini technology will introduce two AI features into a digital mapping service used by more than 2 billion people worldwide. One tool called Ask Maps will expand upon conversational abilities that Google brought to the service last November, giving suggestions to users looking for things such as nearby places to charge their devices, cafes with short lines or a detailed itinerary for a road trip involving several stops and excursions. Gemini's recommendations will draw upon a database spanning more than 300 million places and reviews from more than 500 million contributors that have been accumulated since Google Maps' debut more than 20 years ago.

Members of the South African Church Defenders hold a protest in Durban on Thursday. They are opposing the proposed measures to tighten the government's oversight of churches. AFP

Cyberattack hits Stryker network

▸ Stryker, a major US medical equipment company, said a cyberattack disrupted its global networks on Wednesday, AP/PTI reports from Portage.

"We have no indication of ransomware or malware and believe the incident is contained. Our teams are working rapidly to understand the impact of the attack on our systems," Stryker said in a statement on its website. The logo of Handala, a hacking group linked to Iran, has appeared on company login pages, The Wall Street Journal reported. Stryker's statement said the cyberattack hit its Microsoft programs. Emails seeking additional information were not immediately answered.

US to close Peshawar consulate

▸ The State Department will permanently close the US consulate in Peshawar, Pakistan, which has been the United States' closest diplomatic mission to the Afghan border and served as a primary operations and logistics hub before, during and after the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, AP/PTI reports from Washington.

The department notified Congress this week of its intent to close the consulate and said it would save $7.5 million per year while not adversely affecting its ability to advance US national interests in Pakistan. The move has been under consideration for more than a year since the Trump administration began downsising nearly all federal agencies and is not related to the Iran war.

RSP gets 182 seats in Nepal polls

Balendra Shah to become country's youngest PM

KATHMANDU, PTI

The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) secured a total of 182 seats in Nepal's parliamentary elections, according to the Election Commission, which allocated seats under the proportional representation system on Thursday.

The RSP received the highest number of seats under proportional representation (PR), winning 57, according to a notice issued by the election body. The party also won 125 seats through direct voting.

The House of Representatives (HoR) in Nepal has a total of 275 seats. Of these, 165 members are elected through the First Past the Post (FPTP) or direct voting system, while 110 members are elected through the PR system.

Having secured a clear majority of more than 138 seats in the 275-member HoR, the RSP is now in a position to form the new government under Article 76(1) of the Constitution.

The party has already declared former Kathmandu mayor Balendra Shah, popularly known as "Balen", as its prime ministerial candidate.

The 35-year-old rapper-turned-politician is set to become the first prime minister from the Madhesi community and the youngest ever elected prime minister of Nepal.

According to the Election Commission notice, under the PR system the Nepali Congress (NC) received 20 seats, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) (CPN-UML) 16, the Nepali Communist Party (NCP) nine, while the Shram Sanskriti Party (SSP) and the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) received four seats each.

Under direct voting, the NC secured 38 seats, CPN-UML 25, NCP 17, SSP seven, and RPP five.

The Election Commission will now submit the full report to the president, after which the process of government formation will begin.

China passes new ethnic minority law

BEIJING, REUTERS

China passed a law on a "shared" national identity among the country's 55 ethnic minority groups on Thursday, a move critics say will further erode the identity of people who are not part of the Han Chinese majority and risk branding those who challenge that "unity" as separatists punishable by law.

Called "Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress," the ethnic minority law aims to forge national unity and advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation with the Chinese Communist Party at its core, according to a draft copy of the law.

It was passed at the closing session of the annual meeting of the National People's Congress, China's legislature by 2,756 votes, with three opposing votes and three abstentions, according to a Reuters witness. Officially, China has 56 officially recognised ethnic groups, dominated by the Han Chinese, who account for more than 91% of the country's 1.4 billion people.

China's ethnic minority populations—including Tibetans, Mongols, Hui, Manchus, and Uyghurs — are concentrated in regions that together cover roughly half of the country's land area, much of it rich in natural resources.

The law aims to promote integration across ethnic groups through education, housing, migration, community life, culture, tourism, and development policy, the law said.

It mandates that Mandarin is the basic language of instruction in schools, and for government and official business.

In public settings, where Mandarin and minority languages are used together, Mandarin must be given "prominence in placement, order, and similar respects," the draft said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping votes on an ethnic minority law during the National People's Congress in Beijing on Thursday. REUTERS

SHARED NATIONAL IDENTITY

- China officially recognises 56 ethnic groups, with the Han Chinese making up over 91% of the country's 1.4 billion population
- Minority communities include Tibetans, Mongols, Hui, Manchus and Uyghurs, many living in resource-rich regions covering about half of China's land area
- The new law requires Mandarin to be the main language of instruction in schools and the primary language for government and official work

EU vows to 'respond firmly' to any trade pact breach by US

BRUSSELS, AFP: The EU executive on Thursday vowed to "respond firmly" to any violation of a key tariff deal by the United States after the Trump administration announced new trade probes.

The probes centred on overproduction and importing goods made with forced labour, US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said.

"We will be seeking further clarity from the US on how the opening of this section 301 investigation would interact with the EU-US agreement," European Commission spokesman Olof Gill said.

"The commission would respond firmly and proportionately to any breach of the joint statement commitments," he added.

Gill said the European Union shared the United States' concern about structural overcapacity in the global economy.

"However, the sources of such overcapacity are well identified, and they do not lie in Europe," the spokesman added.

The future of the EU-US tariff pact has been thrown into question after the US Supreme Court ruled in February that Trump lacks the authority to impose levies under a 1977 law.

Smiljan Clarke wins Pritzker architecture prize

NEW YORK, AFP: Chile's Smiljan Radic Clarke, whose modern buildings can sometimes appear "deliberately unfinished," is the recipient of this year's Pritzker Prize, considered the Nobel of architecture, organisers announced on Thursday.

The 60-year-old Radic, a native of Santiago, creates "optimistic and quietly joyful" structures, the jury said in its citation, praising his distinctive approach to form, materials, landscape and spatial imagination in contemporary architecture.

IMPACT ON EDUCATION

US visa changes squeeze rural schools relying on international teachers

WASHINGTON, AP/PTI

Like many school systems facing teacher shortages, South Carolina's Allendale County has looked overseas for help. A quarter of the teachers in the rural, high-poverty district come from other countries.

The superintendent praises the international educators - mostly from Jamaica and the Philippines - for their skill and dedication, but she is preparing to lose some of them as the Trump administration reshapes visa programs.

Facing higher visa sponsorship costs and uncertain immigration policies, Superintendent Vallerie Cave said it feels too risky to extend some international teachers whose contracts are up or bring on others.

"Some of my very best teachers are having to return to their countries," Cave said.

For rural schools especially, President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown is pinching a pipeline used widely to fill staffing shortages that worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rural districts can struggle to attract American teachers to remote areas that lack plentiful housing, shopping and services such as health care, especially for lower salaries than some bigger districts offer.

Cave is hoping to hire local teachers to fill the gaps left by several teachers' impending departures. If she can't, she may expand the district's use of online teachers. Elsewhere, districts are considering hiring uncertified instructors, combining classes or dropping course offerings.

ICC drops probes into US sanctions on Venezuela

THE HAGUE, AP/PTI: The International Criminal Court is dropping an investigation into whether US sanctions against Venezuela qualified as crimes against humanity, prosecutors said on Thursday.

Venezuela asked the ICC in 2020 to look into what it called "unlawful coercive measures," arguing the asset freezes and travel bans targeting Venezuelan officials, first imposed by the United States under President Barack Obama, had caused "widespread suffering."

Following an initial investigation, prosecutors declined to move forward, citing a lack of evidence.

In a statement, the international court's prosecutor's office said that while it was "generally accepted" that sanctions "may have exacerbated an existing dire humanitarian situation," there was not enough evidence of "necessary intent" to pursue criminal charges.

The court noted that the closure of the investigation is "unrelated to the January 2026 events in Venezuela."

In January, US forces captured Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, spiriting them out of the country in a lightning military strike.

Actors Marie Colomb and Nathan Dunglas pose promote their movie 'Project Hail Mary' at the Pathe Palace Theater in Paris on Wednesday. AFP

Retail inflation rises to 10-month high of 3.21% in Feb

Further spike expected in March due to West Asia crisis

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India's retail inflation rose to a 10-month high of 3.21% in February from 2.74% in the previous month, led by an uptick in prices of food, beverages and precious metals, official data showed on Thursday.

Food inflation rose to 3.47% in February, from 2.13% in January, as per data released by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation.

This is the second edition of retail inflation data based on the new Consumer Price Index (CPI) series with base year 2024. Last month, the ministry released the new CPI series data replacing the 2012-based index. It had pegged the January inflation at 2.75%. January data has been revised down slightly to 2.74%.

In February, the CPI-based retail inflation increased by 47 basis points when compared with the previous month.

"The uptick was almost entirely led by the F&B segment, which accounted for as much as 44 bps of the 47 bps rise in the headline print between these months," said Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA.

Core inflation (CPI excluding volatile food and energy sectors) remained unchanged at 3.4%. Excluding precious metals, core inflation stood significantly lower at 2%, indicating broadly contained underlying price pressures.

Tobacco and intoxicants category also witnessed an uptick in inflation, driven by a sharp increase in excise duty on tobacco products.

There was a sharper increase in inflationary pressure in rural areas, when compared with the urban areas. Rural inflation jumped 2.73% in January, to 3.37% in February, while for urban areas it rose from 2.75% to 3.02%.

Vivek Rathi, National Director-Research at Knight Frank India, said the statistical adjustments under the new CPI series have also contributed to the jump in inflation.

"The revision of the CPI base year and the reduced weight of the food basket have altered the composition of the headline print. Meanwhile, firm price pressures in non-food and fuel categories, alongside rising precious metal prices, have contributed to inflation," said Rathi.

Telangana recorded the highest retail inflation (5.02%), followed by Rajasthan (3.53%), Kerala (3.50%), Andhra Pradesh (3.45%), and West Bengal (3.44%). Kerala recorded the highest food inflation at 6.17%. Food inflation in West Bengal stood at 5.54% during the month under review.

Inflation pressure is likely to rise further in the coming months due to West Asia conflict that has led to disruptions in global supply networks.

"Going forward, rising crude oil prices amid the West Asia crisis pose an upside risk to retail inflation," said Rajani Sinha, Chief Economist, CareEdge Ratings.

"Oil marketing companies are expected to absorb crude prices of up to around $90/bbl over the medium term. However, if disruptions persist and crude prices remain above $90 per barrel, OMCs may pass on part of the higher costs to consumers," Sinha said.

If average annual crude oil prices remain elevated at $100/bbl or higher, CPI inflation could rise above 5% in FY27. This is against our base case projection of 4.3% for FY27, prior to the war situation, she added.

Despite the uptick, the headline inflation is likely to remain within RBI's policy tolerance band, said Rathi. "In the near term, the RBI is likely to maintain a cautious, data-dependent stance while using liquidity and forex tools to manage volatility," he added.

"We expect RBI to maintain a status quo on rates for now as they assess the longevity and the impact of the crisis. Meanwhile, we expect RBI to continue to keep liquidity conditions comfortable to ensure financial conditions remain benign to avert any crunch," said Upasna Bhardwaj, Chief Economist, Kotak Mahindra Bank.

Trump's tariff pressure back with 'unfair' trade investigation

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Donald Trump

US President Donald Trump's administration has launched an investigation into what it calls "unfair" trade policies of 16 leading economies, including India and China, a move that may lead to imposition of new tariffs.

The development comes less than a month after the US Supreme Court struck down Trump's previous tariff plan that had rattled global markets.

Singalling a fresh round of tariff tussle, the United States Trade Representative (USTR) announced on Wednesday (US local time) launch of investigations under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. The law allows the US trade representative to impose tariffs or other penalties on countries found to be engaged in unfair trade practices.

The move is seen as a new attempt by the Trump administration to restore tariff pressure on trade partners after the Supreme Court setback.

"While its impact on India's exports will be clear only after the investigation concludes, it seems the move is aimed at imposing a new tariff once the 150 days for the 10% global tariff expires," said Pankaj Chadha, Chairman, Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC) India.

"The latest USTR decision may also be intended to have leverage during trade negotiations with India," Chadha said.

Last month, the US Supreme Court nullified the 'reciprocal tariff' levied by the Trump administration. In response to that, the US government came up with a 10% tariff on all its partners and also announced to raise it to 15%. "So, basically some way or another, the US appears hellbent to maintain a certain level of tariff on most countries," Chadha said.

Sixteen leading economies which are facing the probe are: China, India, the European Union (EU), Japan, Singapore, Switzerland, Norway, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Bangladesh and Mexico.

The Trump administration has alleged that these countries use policies that disadvantage American producers, with almost all of them running significant goods trade surpluses with the US.

The probe covers sectors including steel, aluminum, automobiles, batteries, electronics, chemicals, machinery, semiconductors and solar modules.

The USTR claims to have identified several sectors in India where structural excess capacity or export surpluses may exist. These include solar modules, petrochemicals, steel, textiles, health-related goods, construction materials and automotive products.

According to the US notice, India's solar-module manufacturing capacity is already nearly three times domestic demand, suggesting the possibility of export-driven production surpluses. Similar concerns are raised about expanding capacity in petrochemicals and steel.

Rs 23.44L cr of investors' wealth erodes since start of war

NEW DELHI, PTI

Investors' wealth eroded by Rs 23.44 lakh crore since the beginning of conflict involving the US, Israel and Iran, which has sent shockwaves across equity markets, dragging the BSE Sensex lower by over 6%.

The US and Israel launched military strikes on Iran on February 28, killing Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader. Following the offensive, Iran has carried out a wave of attacks targeting Israeli and American military bases in several Gulf countries, including the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.

Global oil and gas prices surged after Iran virtually blocked the Strait of Hormuz, which handles roughly 20% of global oil and LNG. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 6.66% to $98.11 per barrel. Since February 7, the 30-share BSE Sensex has tumbled 5,252.77 points or 6.46%.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies eroded by Rs 23,44,237.26 crore to Rs 4,40,06,434.01 crore during this time.

"The lack of de-escalation signs in West Asian geopolitical tensions continued to unsettle global markets and push crude oil prices higher," Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

On Thursday, the Sensex tanked 829.29 points or 1.08% to settle at 76,034.42. During the day, it plunged 992.53 points or 1.29% to 75,871.18.

Silver price gains Rs 1,500 to Rs 2.76 L/kg amid global trends

NEW DELHI, PTI: Silver prices gained Rs 1,500 to Rs 2.76 lakh per kg in the national capital on Thursday, amid firm global trends and an intensifying West Asia crisis.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal climbed by Rs 1,500, or 0.54%, to Rs 2,76,500 per kg (inclusive of all taxes). It had closed at Rs 2,75,000 per kg, down by Rs 4,275 on Wednesday. Prices of gold of 99.9% purity retreated Rs 400, ending a three-day rally, to Rs 1,65,200 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) from the previous close of Rs 1,65,600 per 10 grams.

Analysts said gold and silver moved in opposite directions as investors weighed geopolitical developments and macroeconomic signals from the US.

Gold prices slid slightly, reflecting a minor decline amid a firmer dollar and inflation concerns, while silver showed resilience as traders reacted to potential buying opportunities amid geopolitical tensions, Gaurav Garg, Research Analyst at Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

Meanwhile, in the international markets, spot silver gained $1.25 or 1.47% to $86.99 per ounce, and gold traded marginally higher at $5,178.45 per ounce.

VFX hub: Netflix launches Eyeline Studios in Hyderabad

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

Streaming giant Netflix launched its global production and innovation studio, Eyeline Studios, in Hyderabad on Thursday, bolstering its footprint in India. The move supports Netflix's strategy to scale production infrastructure worldwide, positioning India as a key hub for advanced visual effects, virtual production, and next-generation technologies within Hyderabad's thriving Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics (AVGC) ecosystem.

As Eyeline's fifth global site after Los Angeles, Vancouver, Seoul, and London, the facility integrates fully into the network to drive high-end visual storytelling. Eyeline, Netflix's VFX arm was formed by acquiring Scanline VFX in 2022 and merging it last October, and has credits including — A House of Dynamite, Happy Gilmore 2, and the fantasy series, Wednesday.

The new office spans 32,000 sq ft and features state-of-the-art technology for advanced VFX and generative VFX, all supported by a robust hybrid cloud infrastructure. The facility has a modern workspace designed to foster collaboration, creativity, and employee wellbeing.

AP govt invites Capgemini to Visakhapatnam

VISAKHAPATNAM, PTI: Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh on Thursday invited tech major Capgemini to establish an IT development centre and a GCC here with the potential to create 20,000 jobs. Lokesh met Capgemini Chief Executive Officer Aiman Ezzat in the port city and held discussions on potential investments and expansion opportunities in the state.

He encouraged Capgemini to set up service centres for cloud services and Business Process Management verticals.

Ezzat said Capgemini, which employs 3.4 lakh people globally and 2 lakh in India, will examine the proposals made by the AP government.

No shortage of Piped Natural Gas in Bengaluru, says GAIL

Suggests eateries using commercial LPG to switch to PNG line

BENGALURU, DHNS

There is no shortage of Piped Natural Gas (PNG) supply in Bengaluru and hotels and industries connected to the PNG network will continue to receive uninterrupted supply without disruption to their operations, a senior official of GAIL Gas Limited said.

Addressing members of the Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce (BCIC) here on Thursday, Sanjay Kumar Singh, Chief General Manager (CGD) & OIC of GAIL Gas Limited, said, "Piped Natural Gas supply in Bengaluru remains stable and fully under control. Industries, hotels and commercial establishments connected to the PNG network need not be concerned, as there is no disruption in supply and business operations will continue uninterrupted. Those eateries and hotels using commercial LPG and concerned about supply can switch over to the PNG line subject to availability within just two months."

The official assured BCIC members that the government has increased domestic LPG production and therefore, domestic LPG users need not worry about the steady supply. "We at GAIL are steadily expanding our pipeline network and ready to provide fresh piped gas connections across the city of Bengaluru so that more consumers can shift to PNG, which is not only efficient, but also a cleaner and more sustainable energy solution," Singh said.

"India is not entirely dependent on a single international source, as natural gas imports are sourced from multiple regions," he added.

The official also referred to a Government of India gazette notification aimed at better management of natural gas supply. As per the notification, industrial and commercial users will receive up to 80% of their average gas consumption over the past six months, while domestic and CNG segments will continue to receive 100% supply. The measure is intended to rationalise usage and ensure equitable distribution of gas during the current global supply uncertainties.

He clarified that industries can still consume beyond the 80% threshold, but such additional usage will be billed at a different price band. He said the temporary rationalisation is primarily aimed at discouraging wastage and ensuring efficient utilisation of gas across sectors, while maintaining uninterrupted supply.

South Asia exposed to $107-bn LNG bet amid raging conflict

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

South Asia's planned expansion of LNG infrastructure could expose the region to long-term economic and energy security risks in the wake of the maritime situation in West Asia.

The Asia Gas Tracker (AGT) of Global Energy Monitor (GEM) said India has the world's third-largest buildout of gas pipelines with nearly three-quarters in construction.

As energy markets reel from price spikes, it has become a cause of concern for South Asia. "We've seen this story before, and South Asian economies that import LNG will struggle with these price shocks. It's a reminder of the risks of building new gas infrastructure, and that domestic alternatives like renewable power are more affordable and reliable in the long run," Robert Rozansky, global LNG analyst for GEM, said in a report.

AGT data shows that India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan have $107 billion in LNG terminals and gas pipelines that have been announced or are under construction. Bangladesh and Pakistan each have enough LNG import capacity in development to roughly double existing capacity, while India is pursuing the world's second-largest LNG terminal capacity expansion and the third-largest gas pipeline buildout.

Yet despite expectations of a global LNG glut later this decade, GEM finds that even in a relatively-balanced LNG market, disruptions to shipping routes and production can quickly raise delivered prices and tighten access.

NSE IPO gathers pace; appoints bankers, law firms

NEW DELHI, PTI: The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) has appointed 20 merchant bankers, along with law firms and intermediaries, to manage its IPO, making a step towards its much-awaited listing. The IPO committee, chaired by Srinivas Injeti, approved the appointments on Thursday.

The bankers include Kotak Mahindra Capital Company, JM Financial, Axis Capital, IIFL Capital Services, Motilal Oswal Investment Advisors, ICICI Securities, SBI Capital Markets, Nuvama Wealth Management, HDFC Bank, Avendus Capital, Morgan Stanley India Company, Citigroup Global Markets India, J.P. Morgan India, HSBC Securities and Capital Markets (India), IDBI Capital Markets & Securities, 360 ONE WAM, Anand Rathi Advisors, DAM Capital Advisors, Pantomath Capital Advisors and Equirus Capital.

Eight law firms have also been selected — Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, Khaitan & Co, Latham & Watkins LLP, Sidley Austin Singapore Pte. Ltd., AZB & Partners, S&R Associates, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co and Trilegal.

Other intermediaries include MUFG Intime India, Makarand M Joshi & Company, Manian & Rao, RBSA Advisors, Concept Communication and Redseer Strategy Consultants.

Cashfree Payments' new HQ space

BENGALURU, DHNS: Workspaces provider COWRKS on Thursday said Cashfree Payments will establish its new corporate headquarters at the COWRKS Ecoworld centre in Bellandur. Designed and delivered by Enterprise Plus, COWRKS' end-to-end managed office solution for Enterprises and GCCs, Cashfree Payments' new managed workspace spans across 80,000 sq ft and is designed to support the company's next phase of growth.

FRESH HIGHS

Globally, airlines raising fares amid wild oil-price swings

BLOOMBERG

Airlines around the world are increasing fares and raising fuel surcharges as the Iran war briefly sends oil prices above $100 a barrel and stokes fears of jet-fuel shortages from a protracted war.

The cost of plane tickets may jump as much as 9%, said Willie Walsh, Director General of the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Fuel costs account for about a quarter of the expenses paid by carriers.

Demand for alternative routes that bypass West Asia is also surging, pushing up ticket prices. More than 49,000 flights scheduled in and out of the region were canceled between February 28 and March 12, according to data from analytics firm Cirium Ltd.

Here is a rolling list of airlines that have announced increases to fares and fuel surcharges:

AirAsia: Southeast Asia's biggest budget carrier has raised fares and adjusted fuel surcharges, but without specifying by how much. The airline said it will "dynamically monitor market conditions and react proactively as and when needed".

Air Canada: The carrier told CBC News that pricing "has been and continues to be adjusted to reflect these higher fuel costs".

Air France-KLM: The group is raising long-haul ticket prices because of higher oil prices, according to a statement. Increases of €50 ($58) were put in place on round-trip economy tickets starting March 11.

Air India: Air India and Air India Express will phase in fuel surcharges across domestic and international routes from March 12.

- From March 12, a surcharge of Rs 399 ($4.35) will be added to domestic flights and services to South Asia and West Asia
- Surcharges to Southeast Asia will rise to $60 from $40, and for Africa to $90 from $60
- From March 18, the surcharge for Europe will rise $25 to $125, and to North America and Australia by $50 to $200
- Surcharges to Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea to be announced later

Air New Zealand: The airline on March 10 said it will raise fares by an unspecified amount, and may need to take further pricing action and adjust its network and schedule if fuel costs remain elevated. The company also suspended its earnings guidance, saying assumptions on fuel costs announced late last month are no longer valid.

Air Transat: The Montreal-based carrier increased its fuel surcharges on flights to and from Europe, according to CBC News. Tickets that have already been sold can be repriced, an executive told investors during an earnings call.

Cathay Pacific: Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd is doubling its passenger fuel surcharge starting March 18. The levy on a long-haul flight will rise to HK$1,164 ($149) from HK$569. Short- and medium-haul surcharges will increase by a similar ratio, according to the carrier.

Finnair: In the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Finnish carrier pivoted to relying on a long-haul network that flew to Doha and Dubai. The airline has canceled all flights through those cities at least through the end of this month, and it says the current turmoil in oil markets will be reflected in ticket prices. Thus, there's no need for a separate fuel charge.

Hong Kong Airlines: Hong Kong Airlines increased fuel surcharges, starting March 12, on a range of routes, including a 35% increase, or HK$100 ($12.80), to the Maldives, Nepal and Bangladesh. The levy on long-haul destinations including Australia and North America will rise HK$150 to HK$739.

Japan Airlines: JAL, which already applies a fuel surcharge on international routes, said it has no plans to bring forward changes to levies before April 1.

Norse Atlantic: The Norwegian budget airline said higher oil prices likely will be reflected in fares or as a specific surcharge.

Qantas: Australia's largest carrier is raising fares on international routes by around 5% on average. Jet fuel prices have risen by as much as 150% in the past two weeks, which is driving up costs across the business, Qantas said. Flights on European routes, including Perth-London, Perth-Paris and services via Singapore, are more than 90% full this month, up from a typical load factor of 75% at this time of year.

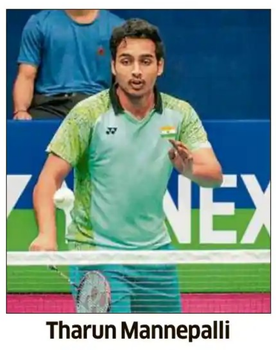
SAS: The Scandinavian carrier introduced what it's calling temporary fuel-related price adjustments given the rapid increase in oil prices.

South African Airways: South Africa's flag carrier is raising airfares after its fuel suppliers implemented substantial price increases. "It is impossible for the airline to absorb them entirely," said a statement. The higher fares take effect on Thursday.

SpiceJet: Founder Ajay Singh said carriers will have "no choice" but to impose a fuel surcharge. He is looking for the government to lower jet fuel taxes, warning that even $90 a barrel oil is "completely unsustainable". Singh said SpiceJet has considered grounding planes if high oil prices persist and that airlines may have to rethink their expansion plans in such an environment.

Thai Airways: The carrier is planning to raise ticket prices 10%-15% to cover surging fuel costs.

Virgin Atlantic: The UK-based airline hedges against high oil prices, though it has a dynamic pricing system based on passenger demand.



Tharun Mannepalli

Mannepalli marches on, George bows out

BASEL, PTI: Indian shuttler Kiran George bowed out in the men's singles pre-quarterfinals after losing to Hong Kong's Jason Gunawan, while young Tharun Mannepalli advanced to the second round after his opponent Kenta Nishimoto retired in the decider at the Swiss Open here.

George fought hard but lost 18-21, 21-16, 16-21 in a round-of-16 match, lasting 70 minutes.

India's men's doubles pair of Hariharan Amsakarunan and M.R. Arjun also lost in the pre-quarterfinals, bowing out to Chen Cheng Kuan and Lin Bing-Wei of Chinese Taipei 17-21, 11-21 in 32 minutes. The ace Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will take on Japan's Hiroki Okamura and Kyohei Yamashita in a pre-quarterfinal match later in the night.

The 24-year-old Mannepalli, ranked 43rd in the world, was leading 16-21 21-16 7-2 when the fifth-seeded Nishimoto retired from the round of 32 match.

State U-18 basketball from March 25

BENGALURU, DHNS: The State Junior Basketball Championship (under-18) for boys and girls will be held in Bengaluru from March 25 to 31.

Players born on or after January 1, 2008, are eligible to participate in the week-long tournament.

HOCKEY WC QUALIFIERS

Indians eye an Italian job

After sealing World Cup berth, Salima-led hosts look to punch final ticket

BENGALURU, DHNS

LIVE 7:30 PM, STAR SPORTS NETWORK, JIOHOTSTAR

India will once again bank on Navneet Kaur's (centre) hot form to take them past Italy in the semifinal of the Women's World Cup Qualifiers in Hyderabad on Friday. HI MEDIA

The Indian women's hockey team have secured their place at the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026, but the hosts are far from finished as they now turn their focus to winning the FIH Hockey World Cup Qualifiers in Hyderabad.

India will face Italy in the semifinal as they look to continue their strong run in front of the home crowd.

India finished on top of Pool B with seven points from three matches and a superior goal difference over Scotland, who also collected seven points to finish second in the group. The hosts registered two wins and one draw in the pool stage.

India began their campaign with a dominant 4-0 win against Uruguay. In their second match, they played out a closely fought 2-2 draw against Scotland before concluding the group stage with a convincing 4-1 victory over Wales.

With the resounding performances in the pool stage, India confirmed their qualification for the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 through the tournament rule which awards a World Cup berth to the highest world-ranked team finishing fourth across the two qualifying events.

The Santiago leg of the qualifiers concluded earlier, where Chile, Australia and Ireland secured the three direct qualification spots. Japan finished fourth in Santiago and are currently ranked No. 15 in the world. With India ranked ninth globally, the hosts have at least ensured they will finish as the highest-ranked fourth-placed team across the two tournaments, thereby confirming their ticket to the World Cup.

Having achieved one of their primary objectives, India will now look to maintain their momentum and push for the place in the final when they take on Italy, who finished second in Pool A with four points after registering one win, one draw and one loss, giving the hosts a slight psychological edge ahead of the semifinal.

India will also look to build on the impressive form of forward Navneet Kaur, who is currently the joint top scorer of the tournament with four goals. She produced a standout performance in the final pool match against Wales, scoring a brilliant hat-trick to cap off the group stage in style.

Italy, meanwhile, will rely on Federica Carta, who has been their key attacking threat and has scored three goals so far in the competition.

In terms of head-to-head encounters, India and Italy have faced each other seven times since 2012. India have won five of those matches, while Italy have registered one victory and one game ended in a draw, giving the hosts a slight psychological edge ahead of the semifinal.

Speaking ahead of the semifinal, the Indian team chief coach Sjoerd Marijne said, "Securing qualification for the FIH Hockey Women's World Cup 2026 is an important milestone for this group, and the players deserve a lot of credit for the way they have performed so far in the tournament. They have shown good discipline, composure and attacking intent throughout the pool stage."

Draper downs Djokovic, Alcaraz advances

INDIAN WELL (US), AFP

Novak Djokovic was dumped out by Jack Draper in a slugfest on Wednesday as the defending champion won 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/5) to reach the quarterfinals at Indian Wells.

World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz sailed into the last eight of the Masters 1000 event for the fifth straight year and there were straight-sets wins for Daniil Medvedev and Cameron Norrie.

But Britain's Draper did it the hard way, wearing down 38-year-old Djokovic in a punishing third set to deny the Serb superstar his first return to the quarterfinals since he won his fifth Indian Wells title in 2016.

He won't have long to savor the victory, with a quarterfinal against two-time finalist Daniil Medvedev coming up on Thursday. Medvedev beat American Alex Michelsen 6-2, 6-4.

Alcaraz advanced with a sparkling 6-1, 7-6 (7/2) victory over Casper Ruud, extending his perfect start to 2026.

Alcaraz, who lifted the trophy in the California desert in 2023 and 2024, was untouchable in the first set, conjuring winners from every angle of the court.

He next faces 29th-ranked Briton Norrie, who beat Australian qualifier Rinki Hijikata 6-4, 6-2.

Swiatek shines

Two-time champion Iga Swiatek barreled into the Indian Wells quarterfinals on Wednesday, beating in-form Czech Karolina Muchova 6-2, 6-0.

World No. 2 Swiatek won the last 10 games to halt Muchova's eight-match winning streak, which included her first title since 2019 in the Qatar Open last month.

Swiatek next faces ninth-seeded Ukrainian Elina Svitolina, who advanced when 44th-ranked Czech Katerina Siniakova retired with a right hip injury while trailing 6-1, 1-1.

Bhambri in semis

India's Yuki Bhambri entered his maiden ATP Masters 1000 semifinal as he and his Swedish partner Andre Goransson defeated Alexander Erler and Andrea Vavassori 6-3, 7-6 in straight sets in Indian Wells.

The 33-year-old Indian had previously reached the doubles quarterfinals at the Masters 1000 level twice, including at Indian Wells last year.

They will take on France's Arthur Rinderknech and Monaco's Valentin Vacherot in the semifinals on Friday.

Great Britain's Jack Draper returns during his win over Serbia's Novak Djokovic in the Indian Wells Open on Wednesday. IMAGN IMAGES

Sumit Antil. PTI

Sumit wins Para Athletics GP gold in javelin throw

NEW DELHI, PTI: Double Paralympic Games gold medallist javelin thrower Sumit Antil lived up to his formidable reputation by clinching the top podium spot as India enjoyed another gilt-edged day in the World Para Athletics Grand Prix here on Thursday.

The main event of the day was the men's javelin throw (F43/F44/F64), and Antil topped with a throw of 69.25 metres. Pushpendra Singh secured the silver medal with a throw of 56.91m, while Poonam Ram took bronze with an effort of 49.48m.

India also dominated the men's 400m T13 event, with Subodh Bhatt winning gold in 51.88 seconds, followed by Priyanshu Kaushik (53.19s) and Avnil Kumar (56.91 s).

Ruling Star wins feature

KOLKATA RESULTS

Sabeel Shariff-trained Ruling Star, ridden by Vishal Bunde, won the Mysore Race Club Ltd Cup, the feature event of the races on Thursday.

1. Fly Like The Wind Handicap - 1400M: Moneycatcher (MS Deora) 1; Made In Heaven (N Darshan) 2; Lineupandcollect (Gaurav Singh) 3; Strong Talons (Vaibhav) 4; Wb: 3/4, 2-3/4, 1L. T: 1:27.74. TB: Shaifq Khan. Fav: Moneycatcher.

2. Quasar Handicap - 1600M: Track Striking (Vaibhav) 1; Dubai Prince (N Darshan) 2; Soul Aquarian (MS Deora) 3; Hermes (Vinod Shinde) 4; Wb: 4, 2, 4L. Nk. T: 1:39.93. TB: Ajith Kumar. Fav: Dubai Prince.

3. Whomakestherules Handicap (Div I) - 1100M: Mi Arion (Vinod Shinde) 1; Cashable (Suraj Narredu) 2; Memphis (MS Deora) 3; Kadhal (Hindu Singh) 4; Wb: 1-1/2, 1-1/2L, Hd. T: 1:05.19. TB: Rutherford Alford. Fav: Cashable.

4. Whomakestherules Handicap (Div II)- 1100M: Surprise Fantasy (Suraj Narredu) 1; Bunde Of Charm (Gauvav Singh) 2; Spirit Bay (Farid Ansari) 3; Swift Lady (MS Deora) 4; Wb: 3, 1-1/2, 3/4L. T: 1:06.61. TB: Neil Darashah. Fav: Surprise Fantasy.

5. Abbeville Handicap - 1600M: Togo (Suraj Narredu) 1; Cigar Galaxy (Trevor Patel) 2; Whirlwind (N Darshan) 3; Multi Success (Vishal Bunde) 4; Wb: 2-1/4, 1-1/2L, Shd. T: 1:38.04. TB: Neil Darashah. Fav: Cigar Galaxy.

6. Mysore Race Club Ltd Cup - 1600M: Ruling Star (Vishal Bunde) 1; Charismatic (Suraj Narredu) 2; Abhicandra (Trevor Patel) 3; Clifford (Farid Ansari) 4; Wb: Hd, 1-3/4, 1-1/2L. T: 1:36.17. TB: Sabeel Shariff. Fav: Charismatic.

7. Mr Gorgeous Handicap - 1100M: Cash N Run (Suraj Narredu) 1; Clever Hans (Hindu Singh) 2; Trillionaire (Gaurav Singh) 3; Kay Star (Vinod Shinde) 4; Wb: 2-1/4, 6L, Nk. T: 0:4.92. TB: Sabeel Shariff. Fav: Cash N Run.

Bengaluru dividends

I race: Rs 26w; 14, 17p; Fc: Rs 89; Q: Rs 40; Shp: Rs 33; Thp: Rs 33; Tri: Rs 181 & 89; Ex: Rs 946 & 780.

II race: Rs 43w; 20, 14p; Fc: Rs 88; Q: Rs 39; Shp: Rs 22; Thp: Rs 26; Tri: Rs 310 & 160; Ex: Rs 349 & 134.

III race: Rs 120w; 31, 12, 18p; Fc: Rs 300; Q: Rs 121; Shp: Rs 32; Thp: Rs 47; Tri: Rs 1,060 & 811; Ex: Rs 10,604 & 6,059.

IV race: Rs 13w; 11, 29, 14p; Fc: Rs 140; Q: Rs 98; Shp: Rs 54; Thp: Rs; 31; Tri: Rs 341 & 149; Ex: Rs 1,082 & 435.

V race: Rs 20w; 13, 11p; Fc: Rs 54; Q: Rs 20; Shp: Rs 23; Thp: Rs 30; Tri: Rs 96 & 45; Ex: Rs 92 & 35.

VI race: Rs 70w; 22, 11, 14p; Fc: Rs 214; Q: Rs 69; Shp: Rs 33; Thp: Rs 37; Tri: Rs 362 & 127; Ex: Rs 4,288 & 4,594.

VII race: Rs 17w; 10, 24, 46p; Fc: Rs 235; Q: Rs 147; Shp: Rs 88; Thp: Rs 98; Tri: Rs 2,303 & 1,316; Ex: Rs 16,994 & 7,283.

Jackpot: Rs 18,442 (21).
Runner-up: Rs 3,952 (42).
I treble: Rs 2,388 (21).
II treble: Rs 407 (381).

AIFF defends India's Asian Cup preparation

NEW DELHI, PTI

Subrata Paul, the AIFF's director of national teams, defended the preparations for the AFC Women's Asian Cup on Thursday, describing them as "quite extensive" despite India's group-stage exit from the tournament in Australia.

The team was knocked out of the tournament after losing all three Group C matches, concluding its campaign with a 3-1 defeat to Chinese Taipei in Sydney on Tuesday.

Despite the disappointing results though, the team showed fighting spirit in their final match and in the opener against Vietnam.

"I believe the preparation was actually quite extensive. The Indian team spent around 48 days overseas for exposure. The team played six matches in Turkey and two in Australia. Prior to that, they spent six days in Dubai and played two matches, and earlier had a 13-day camp in Shillong where they played two matches as well," Paul said.

"In addition, seven national team players represented East Bengal, where they played SAFF and AFC matches, and also featured in the Indian Women's League, playing six to seven matches.

"Altogether, the players prepared for around 67 days, playing 13 games internationally, and about 17 matches for their club side," Paul, the former India goalkeeper who has also played in the men's Asian Cup, added.

In their first appearance in the tournament on merit, India finished bottom of their group.

GOVT. TOOL ROOM & TRAINING CENTRE

Rajajinagar Industrial Estate, Bengaluru-560010. Ph: 080-23157189, Fax: 080-23301683, e-Mail:gttc.projects@karnataka.gov.in
Website:https://gttc.karnataka.gov.in

No: GTTC/PROJ/CIVIL-ELE/WORKS/BD-160&161/2025-26 Date:12.03.2026

SHORT-TERM e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tenders for the following works have been invited through e-procurement by Government Tool Room and Training Centre.

Sl. No.	Bid No.	Centre Name	Name of Work
1	160	Kalaburagi (Phase-II)	Establishment of Multi Skill Development Centre for GTTC (Phase-II) Gulburga University, Kalaburagi.
2	161	Sedam	Establishment of New GTTC at Sedam, Kalaburagi District.

Tender documents are available on the e-portal **from 13.03.2026** and Pre-bid meeting is scheduled **on 23.03.2026.** The last date for submission of tender in the e-portal is **30.03.2026 before 5:30 PM.** For more details, please visit the e-procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** or contact the helpline number: **+91 9240214000, +91 9240214001.**

Sd /- Managing Director

KARNATAKA STATE MINERALS CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Regd. Office : TTMC 'A' Block 5th Floor, BMTC Building, KH Road, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-560027.
Phone: 080-22278813/14/15/16, Fax : 080-22213172
Website: https://ksmc.karnataka.gov.in

No.153/KSMCL/MECH/KMM,SIOM,TIOM/W-Tanker Call-II/2025-26/3255 Date: 12.03.2026

SHORT TERM E-TENDER INVITATION

KSMCL Invites **Short Term** E-tender for Purchase of 10 KL Capacity Three Numbers Water Tanker to Karya Magnesite Hullahalli, Nanjanagudu Tq. Mysore District, and Subbrayanahalli and Thimmappana gudi Iron Ore Mines Sandur, Sandur Tq, Ballari Dist, Karnataka

CALENDER OF EVENTS

Commencement to Download from website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in	12.03.2026
Last date for receiving the queries through e-procurement portal	14.03.2026 up to 11:00 am
Last date and Time for uploading e-tender in E-Procurement platform on or before	20.03.2026 up to 5:00 pm
The Technical bid will be opened online by the Authorized officers on	23.03.2026 At 11:00 am
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Rs.1,98,000/-

Tender documents may be downloaded from e-procurement GOK Platform website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Contact for any support in uploading & registration, E-procurement Helpdesk: 080-46010000/ 68948777.

Sd/-
General Manager (P)

DIPR/CP/6205/AKAR/2025-26

Executive Engineer
Public Works Department
No.1 Building Division, S.J.P. Campus, Bengaluru. Ph: 080-22255210

No. EE/Bld.1/AE- 3&4/2025-26/83 Date: 11.03.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT)

The above Department invites Tenders through e-procurement portal of GoK **(http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)** from eligible Tenderers for providing Wardrobe, UPVC windows, Water Proofing Treatment to arrest leakages, painting, construction of supervisor/labour quarters, providing and supplying Automatic Commercial Water Softener Equipment, Renovation of Superintendent of Police and Police Inspector rooms, Construction of Mass Production Unit and other development works, **total of 06 works** at various notified places in Bengaluru. Approx. value of work: **Min. Rs. 13.69 lakhs, Max. Rs. 282.12 lakhs.** EMD: **Min. Rs. 34,300/-, Max. Rs. 4,23,200/-.** Cost of Document: As in e-portal. Period of Completion for each work: **from 2 Months to 9 Months.** Last date for downloading Tender through e-procurement portal and submission through online: **For Sl. No. 1 to 5: 18.03.2026 up to 5.20 PM and for Sl. No. 6: 20.03.2026 up to 11.30 AM.** Date of opening the Tender: as per e-procurement guidelines. Further information, brief details of the works, approx. amount, EMD, Reservation, etc. can be obtained from the above office or from e-procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

DIPR/DD-C.P/6199/KSMCA/2025-26 **Sd/- Executive Engineer**
from e-procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
DIPR/DD-C.P/6199/KSMCA/2025-26 **Sd/- Executive Engineer**

BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Vidyaranyapura division, No. 582, 1st Main BEL Layout 2nd Stage, Vidyaranyapura, Bengaluru –97

No:BNCC/EE/VDP-D/KPPP/05/2025-26 **Date: 11-03-2026**

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(TWO COVER SYSTEM)

(Through **GOK** KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** only)
The Executive Engineer, Vidyaranyapura Division, BNCC, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible Contractors registered in BNCC or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD /Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Government Organizations for the construction of works detailed in the table below.

Sl No.	Name of the works
1.	Construction of Retaining wall and protection works at Singapura Gutta Land Slide and other flood relief works in **Ward No-14** Kuvempunagara (Call-2) **Amount put to tender : ₹.82.26 Lakhs, EMD: ₹.2.00 Lakhs (Rupees 1.00 Lakh through KPP Portal, balance Rs. 1.00 Lakh in the form of Bank Guarantee)**

Calendar of Events: (1) Availability of Tender documents on **13-03-2026** at **4:00** pm Onwards. (2) Last Date of receipt of queries on **20-03-2026** upto **3:00** pm. (3) Last Date & Time for receipt of tenders on **24-03-2026** upto **4:00** pm. (4) Date & Time for Opening of Technical Bid on **25-03-2026** at **4:30** pm. (5) Date &Time for Opening of Financial Bid Will be intimated after obtaining approval for Technical Evaluation

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Vidyaranyapura Division, Zone-1

Government of Karnataka
KARNATAKA MEDICAL COLLEGE AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE, HUBBALLI - 580021.
Ph : (O) 0836-2373348, Fax :0836-2373724

No.: KMC&RI/Adhoc/430/2025-26 Dated : 12-03-2026

WALK-IN-INTERVIEW

KMCRI Hubballi IVF Centre invites application for the post of **ART Consultant (Gynaecologist) & Qualified Embryologist** on Per - Visit Consultancy Basis.

Details of qualification, experience, Responsibility and terms and conditions are available on institute website:

https: //kmcrihubballi.karnataka.gov.in/english

Sd/- Director,
Karnataka Medical College & Research Institute, Hubballi

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರಕಾರ
ಸರಕಾರಿ ಲೇಡಿಗೋಶನ್ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ, ಮಂಗಳೂರು–575001, ದ.ಕ. ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ
ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 0824–2445611

ಕ್ರ.ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಸಿ(2)47/2025–26 ದಿ: 11–03–2026

ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಮರು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆ

ವಿಷಯ: 2026–27 ನೇ ಸಾಲಿಗೆ ಫಾರ್ಮಾಸಿಸ್ಟ್, ಕಿರಿಯ ಪ್ರಯೋಗ ಶಾಲಾ ತಂತ್ರಜ್ಞರು, ಡಾಟಾ ಎಂಟ್ರಿ ಆಪರೇಟರ್, ಗ್ರೂಪ್–ಡಿ ಮತ್ತು ಸ್ವೀಪರ್/ಗಾರ್ಡ್ ಸೇರಿ ಒಟ್ಟು 15 ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ಸೇವೆಯನ್ನು ಪಡೆಯಲು ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಮರು ಟೆಂಡರು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸುವ ಕುರಿತು.

ಕೆ.ಟಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಅಧಿನಿಯಮ 1999, ನಿಯಮಗಳು 2000 ರಂತೆ ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಹೊರ ಸಂಪನ್ಮೂಲ ಏಜೆನ್ಸಿ ಮುಖಾಂತರ 2026–27 ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಅವಧಿಗೆ ಸರಕಾರಿ ಲೇಡಿಗೋಶನ್ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ, ಮಂಗಳೂರು, ಇಲ್ಲಿಗೆ ಒಟ್ಟು 15 ವಿವಿಧ ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ಸೇವೆಯನ್ನು ಪಡೆಯಲು ದ್ವಿ–ಬಿಡ್ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ **KPP Portal** ಮೂಲಕ ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಮರು ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಆಸಕ್ತ ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯವರು ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಬಹುದು, ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ **Karnataka public procurement** ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಲ್ಲಿ ವೀಕ್ಷಿಸಬಹುದು.

(1) ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಅಪ್ ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಲು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **11–03–2026** (2) ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಅಪ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಲು ಅಂತಿಮ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **18–03–2026** ಅಪರಾಹ್ನ **4.30** ರವರೆಗೆ (3) ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **20–03–2026.** (ಆಥವಾ ಅಂತಿಮ ದಿನಾಂಕದಂದು ಆಕಸ್ಮಿಕವಾಗಿ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ರಜೆ ಘೋಷಣೆಯಾದರೆ ಮರುದಿನ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಕೆಲಸದ ದಿನದಂದು ಬಿಡ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯಲಾಗುವುದು)

ಸಹಿ/– ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಅಧೀಕ್ಷಕರು
ಸರಕಾರಿ ಲೇಡಿಗೋಶನ್ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ, ಮಂಗಳೂರು

DIPR/DK/KSMCA/1738/25-26 dt: 12.03.2026

Government of Karnataka
Department Of Archaeology, Museums And Heritage, Mysore
Karnataka Exhibition Authority Premises, Mysuru-570010,
Tel : 0821-2424673/74, Fax No.0821-2424665,
Email- commr_amh@yahoo.in, Web : https://archaeology.karnataka.gov.in, https://nammakarnataka.in

Notification Number: DAMH/CW/T-35/2025-26 Date: 09.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

On behalf of the Governor, Government of Karnataka, the department of Archaeology, Museum and Heritage, Mysuru has invited the item wise tender for the 03 works of **DAMH/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT-215, to 217** The amount of minimum **Rs.81.18 lakhs** to Maximum **Rs.41.00 lakhs** as per the tender documents KW-2 & 3 under the tender documents. The Tender documents can be obtained through **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)** e-portal from **date: 10.03.2026** onwards.

Last date and time of any Queries for tender	20.03.2026, 17.00 hrs
Last date and time of tender submission	25.03.2026, 16.00 hrs
Opening of Date and Time of Technical bid	27.03.2026, 16.30 hrs
Opening of Date and Time of Financial bid	30.03.2026, 11.00 hrs

Sd/- Commissioner
Department of Archaeology, Museums And Heritage, Mysore.

DIPR/MYSORE/SHIRDISAI/1818/2025-26

WFI suspects human trafficking over forged letter

NEW DELHI, PTI: A suspected human trafficking attempt has come to light after individuals posing as Indian wrestlers sought visas from the Hungarian Embassy in New Delhi for a purported competition in Budapest, prompting the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) to clarify that the documents submitted by them were fake.

The embassy sought verification from WFI on Thursday after receiving visa applications supported by a recommendation letter allegedly issued by the national federation on March 4 for participation in an "international wrestling training and competition programme" scheduled in Budapest from March 15 to 22.

The WFI swiftly responded and said that the letter was forged and had not been issued by the federation.

"This has reference to your e-mail dated March 12 seeking clarification regarding the authenticity of the document... the attached letter is fake and has not been issued by the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI)," replied WFI president Sanjay Kumar Singh to the embassy.

The federation also pointed out discrepancies in the document, including the use of the name of a former office-bearer in an incorrect capacity.

"It is also clarified that Mr V.N. Prasood is no longer holding the position of Secretary General of WFI and is currently serving as Vice President, WFI. The matter has been verified with Mr Prasood, who has categorically denied issuing any such letter," Singh said.

FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Valverde shows City the Real power

Midfielder scores a hat-trick in 3-0 win; PSG slay Chelsea 5-2

PARIS, AFP

Federico Valverde scored an unlikely hat-trick as Real Madrid trounced Manchester City 3-0 in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie on Wednesday, while holders Paris Saint-Germain beat Chelsea 5-2.

Premier League leaders Arsenal snatched a 1-1 draw at Bayer Leverkusen to preserve their unbeaten record in Europe this season, while Bodo/Glimt continued their fairytale run with a 3-0 win over Sporting.

Alvaro Arbeloa's record 15-time European champions avenged their loss to City in the league phase as Valverde struck three times in the first half to hand Madrid full control of the tie despite the absence of the injured Kylian Mbappe.

"(It was) incredible, you dream of nights like this," Valverde told Movistar. "It's been a long time since I enjoyed a game like this."

Valverde ran onto a long kick from Thibaut Courtois and dribbled past Gianluigi Donnarumma to slot home and give Madrid the lead at the Santiago Bernabeu against City as the teams met in a knockout tie for the fifth season running.

The Uruguayan midfielder arrowed a low drive into the far corner to double Madrid's advantage and then completed his hat-trick with a sublime touch and finish after linking up with Brahim Diaz.

City could have suffered an ever heavier defeat but Donnarumma saved a second-half penalty from Vinicius Junior after the City goalkeeper brought down the Brazilian.

"I had a feeling that we were better than the result said... but the result is here," City boss Pep Guardiola told TNT Sports, refusing to write off his team's chances next week. "I had a feeling that we were better than the result said... but the result is here," City boss Pep Guardiola told TNT Sports, refusing to write off his team's chances next week.

PSG have one foot in the quarterfinals after two late goals from Khvicha Kvaratskhelia at the Parc des Princes.

Bradley Barcola fired PSG in front but Malo Gusto's scruffy effort skipped past Matfei Safonov to bring Chelsea level.

Ousmane Dembele finished off a clinical counter to restore the lead for the hosts before half-time, only for Enzo Fernandez to reply once more for Chelsea after excellent work from Pedro Neto.

A mistake from Filip Jorgensen saw Vitinha lob the Chelsea goalkeeper to put PSG on top for the third time, with Kvaratskhelia hammering in a superb fourth and then potentially applying the fatal blow for Luis Enrique's side in stoppage time.

Despite an unprecedented six English teams featuring in the last 16, not a single one won and only two avoided defeat in Europe this week.

Arsenal needed an 89th-minute penalty from Kai Havertz against his former club to snatch a draw away to Bayer Leverkusen.

Robert Andrich headed in a corner for Leverkusen moments into the second half to leave Arsenal, who won all eight of their league phase matches, staring at defeat in Germany.

But Havertz came off the bench and converted from the spot after a foul on Noni Madueke to ensure Arsenal remain favourites to reach the quarterfinals.

Bodo/Glimt enjoyed another remarkable Champions League night as they swept Portugal's Sporting aside 3-0 to register their fifth win in a row in the competition. Sondre Brunstad Fet put Bodo ahead from the penalty spot just after the half-hour mark and Ole Didrik Blomberg made it two in first-half injury time.

Kasper Hogh scored his fifth goal in as many European games with 19 minutes remaining to spark wild celebrations for the Norwegian underdogs.

Results: Bayer Leverkusen: 1 (Andrich 46th) drew with Arsenal: 1 (Havertz 89th); Bodo/Glimt: 3 (Brunstad Fet 32nd, Blomberg 45+1, Hogh 71st) bt Sporting: 0; Paris Saint-Germain: 5 (Barcola 10th, Dembele 40th, Vitinha 74th, Kvaratskhelia 86th, 90+4th) bt Chelsea: 2 (Gusto 28th, Fernandez 57th); Real Madrid: 3 (Valverde 20th, 27th, 42nd) bt Manchester City: 0.

Real Madrid's Federico Valverde (centre) celebrates with team-mates after scoring a hat-trick against Manchester City during their Champions League clash on Wednesday night. REUTERS

Neto faces punishment for pushing ball boy

Chelsea's Pedro Neto is set to be punished by UEFA for pushing a ball boy during his team's 5-2 defeat by Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League after European football's governing body announced on Thursday it had opened disciplinary proceedings, reports AFP from Paris.

"Disciplinary proceedings have been instigated against... Pedro Neto for unsporting behaviour," a UEFA statement said.

"UEFA's disciplinary bodies will take a decision on this case in due course."

Neto knocked over the ball boy as he ran over to grab the ball late in Wednesday's last 16 first leg, with Chelsea trailing 4-2 at the time. The incident led to a mass altercation involving players from both teams, and Neto later apologised.

Shubman Gill

Gill set to be named Cricketer of the Year

NEW DELHI, PTI: India's Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill is set to be named Cricketer of the Year at the BCCI's annual awards to be held here on March 15.

The 26-year-old, who was not picked in the T20 side that defended the World Cup crown last month, enjoyed a stellar run in the other two formats.

He amassed 983 runs in Tests, including a whopping 754 in the drawn away series against England in 2025, at average of over 70.

His ODI runs tally stood at 490, including 188 runs during India's title-winning Champions Trophy campaign .

Overall, Gill accumulated 1,764 runs across formats at an average of 49, dotted with seven centuries and three fifties.

Although his T20 International form was not particularly impressive, he was in tremendous form during the IPL, scoring 650 runs for Gujarat Titans at an average of 50.

Former India head coach Rahul Dravid is set to be honored with the Col CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award for his monumental contribution to Indian cricket, including guiding the team to the 2024 T20 World Cup title.

The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) is set to be named the Best Association in domestic cricket.

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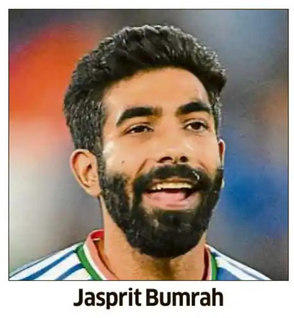
Bumrah relishes taking charge in pressure situations

AHMEDABAD, PTI

India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah said he relishes taking responsibility in pressure situations and described the T20 World Cup defence as one of the most fulfilling of his career.

Bumrah played a stellar role, claiming four wickets as India handed New Zealand a crushing 96-run defeat in the final to become the only team to win the T20 World Cup three times.

"I don't want to hide behind, I want to be in the thick of things. I always wanted to do a tough job," said Bumrah, who was adjudged the Player of the match, in a video shared by BCCI after the victory.



Jasprit Bumrah

"I've played cricket for that. I started cricket for that. When I'm able to make a difference, that gives me so much joy. No better feeling than that."

For the Gujarat-born pacer, the triumph carried added emotional significance as it came at the venue where his cricket journey began.

"I started my cricket here. I played all my cricket here, come up the ranks through playing for Gujarat over here and winning the World Cup here, winning, being Man of the Match. The last time we fell just short, this time we went over it, really happy."

Bumrah also spoke about the presence of his family during the title triumph, calling the moment deeply personal. "My son came. He was there last time as well; this time, he was there. My mum came, really special. I don't know about full circles, but really, really happy, back-to-back World Cups never really happen. Really grateful God is really kind, and I couldn't be more thankful."

Final batch of SA, WI players leave India

DUBAI, PTI: The last batch of South African and West Indian players stranded in India after the T20 World Cup have departed, the ICC announced on Thursday, ending a crisis caused by the closure of Gulf air space in the wake of the raging West Asia conflict.

The ongoing war threw travel plans into disarray, leaving the South African and West Indies teams stranded in Kolkata due to closure of air space and airports at major transit points like Dubai. The West Indies and South Africa played their final T20 World Cup matches in Kolkata on March 1 and March 4 respectively. While nine West Indies players had left earlier this week, the remaining 16 were booked on commercial flights. A 29-member Proteas contingent has also departed.

ICC said that ensuring the "safe onward travel for all players and staff was the sole aim".

Verstappen jokes new F1 cars are like 'Mario Kart'

SHANGHAI, AFP: Four-time world champion Max Verstappen **(in pic)** said Thursday he was not having much fun driving the new era of Formula One cars, joking he was "practising with Mario Kart" because it was more realistic than his simulator.

The Red Bull driver crashed in qualifying in the season-opener in Australia last weekend before having to carve his way from 20th on the grid to finish a creditable sixth.

The new cars require battery management and energy harvesting with a 50-50 split between conventional and electrical power. They also have features such as straight-line mode, active aero, overtake and boost buttons, which Verstappen reckons are nearer to a video game. "I swapped the simulator for my Nintendo Switch. I'm practising with Mario Kart, actually. Finding the mushrooms is going quite well, the blue shells are a bit more difficult."

Verstappen announced this week that he would be driving in the Nurburgring 24-hour race this year.

"I wish I had a bit more fun for sure," he said of Formula One at the moment. "I mean, I get to race the Nordschleife (Nurburgring) and I hope in the coming years I can do Spa and hopefully Le Mans.

"So I'm combining stuff and I'm also doing other stuff that is a lot of fun. It's a bit conflicted because I don't really enjoy to drive the car, but I do enjoy working with all the people in the team and from the engine department as well."

He did express optimism that things would improve as the new rules and regulations were adjusted and said drivers were already in discussions over changes. "I hope, of course, that it gets better," said the Dutchman. "I've had discussions with F1 and the FIA and I think we are working towards something that will improve everything."

Haryana's Anukriti takes the lead

BENGALURU, DHNS: Former National Champion Anukriti Bishnoi from Haryana is in the lead in the Women's division at the end of Round 1 of the ARC 34th National Tenpin Bowling Championships here.

Anukriti scored total pinfall of 964 across the first block of six games on the demanding Long oil pattern. Transitioning to the Medium oil condition for her second block, she started with a score of 186 in Game 1 and quickly raised the tempo with an impressive high game of 235 in Game 2.

Maintaining consistent form through the remainder of the block, she posted scores of 168, 171, 191, and 156. In the Men's division, top 40 bowlers from Round 1 played their first block of six games in Round 2 on Long oil condition. Kishan R continues to lead the table with total pinfall of 3767 in 18 games.

Anukriti Bishnoi

◆ ON TV ◆

HOCKEY

Women's WC Qualifiers Semi-final: England vs Scotland **(5:15 pm)**, India vs Italy **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

FOOTBALL

IFL: Rajasthan United FC vs Namdhari FC **(4 pm)**, Aizawl FC vs Real Kashmir FC **(6:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network, SonyLIV.**

TENNIS

Indian Wells: Quarterfinal **(5:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode.**

MOTORSPORT

Formula 1: Chinese GP **(practice 1: 9 am; sprint qualifying: 1 pm)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode.**

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